

WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

THURSDAY 14TH FEBRUARY 2019 AT 4.30 P.M.

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

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

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 15th November 2018 (Pages 1 - 8)
4. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Revenue Monitoring Quarter 1 - 3 (Pages 9 - 16)
5. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Service Plan 2019/2020 (Pages 17 - 42)

6. Activity and Performance Data - Quarter 1-3 (Pages 43 - 76)
7. Information Report - Reuniting dogs with Owners Out of Hours (Pages 77 - 82)
8. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board - 2019/2020 Proposed Meeting Dates

All meetings to commence at 4:30pm:

- Thursday 27th June 2019
 - Thursday 26th September 2019
 - Thursday 14th November 2019
 - Thursday 13th February 2020
9. To consider any other business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

4th February 2019

WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

15TH NOVEMBER 2018, AT 4.30 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors R. J. Laight (Chairman), P. J. Whittaker, Mrs. B. Behan, Prosser (Vice-Chairman), P. Witherspoon (Substitute), J. Squires, A. Feeney, M. King, J. Smith and J. Baker

Partner Officers: Mr. P. Merrick, Malvern Hills District Council and Wychavon District Council and Ms. A. Davey, Worcester City Council.

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mr. S. Wilkes, Ms. C. Flanagan, Ms. K. Lahel, Mr. D. Mellors and Ms. A. Scarce

19/18

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Fisher, Redditch Borough Council, J. Owenson, Malvern Hills District Council.

It was noted that Councillor P. Witherspoon was in attendance as substitute for Councillor J. Fisher, Redditch Borough Council.

Apologies for absence were also received from Mr. M. Parker, Wyre Forest District Council.

20/18

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

21/18

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 4th October 2018 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 4th October 2018 be approved as a correct record.

22/18

REVENUE MONITORING APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2018

The Executive Director, Finance and Resources, Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) and Redditch Borough Council (RBC) introduced the report and in so doing drew Members attention to a number of areas, including:

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15th November 2018

- The detailed revenue report at appendix 1 and the assumptions which had been made.
- Vacant posts within the services and projected savings in salaries, which had been offset by the costs associated with additional agency staff.
- The inclusion of three technical officers within the salary figures.
- A technical officer specifically funded by Worcester City Council to work on Gull Control for a two year fixed term contract.
- The detailed explanations within the report were highlighted, in respect of overspends for Pest Control and Taxi/Alcohol and other licensing functions.
- The total income achieved.

Following a brief discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the final financial position for the period April – September 2018 be noted;
- (b) that partner councils be informed of their liabilities for 2018-19 in relation to Bereavements / Pest Control, as follows:

Council	Apr–Sept Actual Bereavements £000	18 for	Estimated for Pest Control £000	2018/19 Control
Redditch	6		5	
Malvern	3			
Worcs City	9			
Bromsgrove	1			
Wychavon			3	
Wyre Forest			1	
Total	19		9	

and

- (c) that partner councils be informed of their liabilities for 2018-19 in relation to three additional Technical Officers recruited, as follows:

Council	Estimated 2018/19 Tech Officer Primary Authority £000	Estimated 2018/19 Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Estimated 2018/19 Tech Officer Gull Control £000
Redditch	3	1	
Malvern	3	3	
Worcs City	3	1	8

Bromsgrove	3	2	
Wychavon	4	3	
Wyre Forest	3	1	
Total	19	11	8

23/18

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BUDGETS 2019-20 TO 2021-22

The Executive Director, Finance and Resources BDC and RBC presented the budget for 2019/20 to 2021/22. A number of areas were highlighted in presentation of the report, including:

- A 2% pay award across all staff for 2019/20 and a 1% award for 2020/21 and 2021/22.
- Pension back fund deficit paid in advance by all partners.
- The increase in employees' budget which took account of the additional staff.
- Additional income for unavoidable salary pressures.
- Partner contributions, it was understood Wyre Forest District Council were looking to make savings for 2019/20 which may impact on the figures and necessitate this being revisited at the February meeting of the Board.

The Head of Regulatory Services advised that he had spoken to the Corporate Director: Economic Prosperity and Place, Wyre Forest District Council, to discuss how savings could be made without impacting on the statutory duties of the Council. This may mean a minor change to the percentages detailed in the report.

Councillor A. Feeney, Worcester City Council, highlighted that the amount previously agreed for the Gull Control had been £15k and asked that the report be amended accordingly.

Following presentation of the report, Members discussed a number of areas in more detail:

- The income increase without any increase in resources and whether this was achievable. Officers confirmed that this would be monitored as it was acknowledged there was the possibility that the income generated would plateau and if this became a concern then consideration would be made as to whether further funding needed to be made available.
- Members asked that in view of this whether it would be appropriate to report back to the Board and it was confirmed that Officers had planned to bring a report back to the September 2019 meeting.
- Concerns that only 1% had been factored in for salary increased in 2020-22. The Executive Director, Finance and Resources confirmed that this was the figure which had been used by

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Bromsgrove and Redditch as a base figure and should it be any higher then this would be picked up at a later date.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the gross expenditure budget of £3,506k as shown in Appendix 1 of the report be approved;
- (b) that the income budget of £489k as shown in Appendix 1 of the report be approved;
- (c) that the revenue budget allocations for 2019/20 – 2021/22 be approved;

Bromsgrove	£439k
Malvern	£386k
Redditch	£529k
Worcester City	£499k
Wychavon	£701k
Wyre Forest	£463k
Total	£3,017k

- (d) that the revised partner percentage allocations for 2019/20 onwards be approved:-

	%
Bromsgrove	14.55
Malvern	12.79
Redditch	17.53
Worcester City	16.54
Wychavon	23.24
Wyre Forest	15.35

- (e) that the additional partner liabilities in relation to three additional Technical Officers be approved;

Council	Tech Officer Primary Authority £000	Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Tech Officer Gull Control £000
Redditch	5	2	
Malvern	4	10	
Worcs City	5	4	15
Bromsgrove	4	6	
Wychavon	7	9	
Wyre Forest	5	5	
Total	30	36	15

and

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

24/18

ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2

The Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager presented the Activity and Performance Data Quarter 2 report and highlighted that, as usual, licensing and environmental health nuisances continued to provide the greatest demand on officer time. It was noted that an increased number of complaints which related to filthy and verminous premises had been received in quarter 2. Work on the investigation of pollution offences around the renewable heat incentive, which had been reported at the previous meeting continued with Technical Services undertaking its third enforcement operation in this area.

Further areas within the report which were highlighted, included:

- A correction in respect of sickness figures from the previous report. The recalculated figure for quarter 1 was 1.83 days per FTE with quarter 2 being 2.77. This was a significant improvement on the previous year.
- Cumulatively business satisfaction showed a slight increase, with food businesses remaining at around 98%, which demonstrated that food businesses across the county were well run.
- There continued to be concerns around the return rates for customer satisfaction and a review had commenced to look at this.
- It was noted that 56 compliments against 15 complaints had been received and this was a similar ratio to previous years, despite the dip in customer satisfaction.
- The total income was slightly behind target at 4.7% of base budget; however officers believed that further income from Primary Authority work and other sources would see this increase in the second half of the year.

Following presentation of the report Members discussed the number of public houses which had closed within the county in the last 12 months. Whilst officers did not have this information to hand it was noted that although this could have an impact on some areas, that those public houses which remained open were diversifying in what they offered to the public, for example entertainment, which in turn provided other challenges.

The role of the dog wardens was also discussed including whether cruelty to dogs was part of the role. It was confirmed that with the engagement of two new dog wardens, animal welfare work in certain circumstances would also be addressed.

Councillor P. Witherspoon, Redditch Borough Council, raised concerns in respect of defective vehicles, as the highest level was in Redditch. It was confirmed that this referred to taxis and Officers agreed to ask the examiner from the depot to attend a Redditch Licensing Committee to discuss his work. This may help Members to understand the process undertaken prior to a vehicle coming to them for inspection as part of their role on sub committees, for age criteria vehicles, although it does not form part of their assessment.

RESOLVED that the Activity and Performance Data Quarter 2 report be noted.

25/18

DUTY DESK INFORMATION REPORT

The Business and Relationships Manager presented the Duty Desk Information Report which gave an insight into the work of the team, which was the first point of contact for all WRS regulatory services matters. Members were reminded that originally this service had been undertaken by the Worcestershire Hub and following a request for additional funding; Officers recommended that the service should take its own calls. After a period of transition and review for this provision, Officers thought it would be helpful to provide Members with a report which would allow them a better understanding of how the team operated and the type of calls WRS were taking on behalf of partners.

Members were provided with details around the current position and how the team was made up, together with details of the types of calls the duty desk handle. It was important for Members to note that this was not seen as a call centre, with the aim being to, wherever possible, answer the query immediately and close it at the first point of contact. It was therefore highlighted that measures such as how quickly the call was answered were no longer relevant. However, call waiting times were reviewed together with abandoned calls.

It was noted that the website had been reviewed in 2017 to encourage more consumer engagement and understanding of the service provided. It had also been made more user-friendly and accessible. The team had also worked with Wyre Forest IT and introduced an automated phone messaging system in order to reduce waiting times, get customers to the right person more quickly, reduce the number of callers that required a difference service and filter contract work. Officers also drew Members attention to table 2 which showed a comparison of calls taken and abandoned in 2017 and 2018, which showed a decrease in the number of abandoned calls.

Following presentation of the report, Members raised a number of queries which were discussed in more detail, this included:

- Whether the increase in calls received for star/lost dogs related to increased publicity of the service.

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- Members had received positive feedback from residents on the service provided and it was questioned whether the use of “live chat” had been considered – officers advised that this would be dependent on the software available and whether there was sufficient resources to cover such a service, but it was something which could be discussed with the web development team at Wyre Forest District Council, who provided IT support to WRS.
- The service requested by District detailed in Table 4 and whether these had any budgetary implications for each district. Officers confirmed that these were purely for information purposes and there was more significant work carried out behind the scenes which was used to calculate the percentages for each District for the annual budgets.

RESOLVED that the Duty Desk Information Report be noted.

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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.

The Head of Regulatory Services and Members took the opportunity to thank the Business and Relationships Manager for her and her team’s hard work and gave their best wishes to her for her forthcoming maternity leave.

The meeting closed at 5.25 p.m.

Chairman

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WRS Board 14th February 2019

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES REVENUE MONITORING APRIL – DECEMBER 2018

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board:

- 1.1 Note the final financial position for the period April – December 2018
- 1.2 That partner councils are informed of their liabilities for 2018-19 in relation to Bereavements / Pest Control

Council	Apr–Dec 18 Actual for Bereavements £000	Estimated 2018/19 for Pest Control £000
Redditch	6	5
Malvern	4	
Worcs City	9	
Bromsgrove	1	
Wychavon		2
Wyre Forest		1
Total	20	8

- 1.3 That partner councils are informed of their liabilities for 2018-19 in relation to three additional Technical Officers

Council	Estimated 2018/19 Tech Officer Primary Authority £000	Estimated 2018/19 Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Estimated 2018/19 Tech Officer Gull Control £000
Redditch	3	1	
Malvern	3	2	
Worcs City	3	1	3
Bromsgrove	3	1	
Wychavon	4	2	
Wyre Forest	3	1	
Total	19	7	3

Contribution to Priorities

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

Introduction/Summary

This report presents the financial position for Worcestershire Regulatory Services for the period April – Dec 2018.

Background

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

Report

The following reports are included for Board's attention:

- Revenue Monitoring April – Dec 18 – Appendix 1
- Income Breakdown – April – Dec 18 – Appendix 2

Revenue Monitoring

The detailed revenue report is attached at Appendix 1. This shows a projected outturn 2018/19 surplus of £2k. It is appreciated this is an estimation to the year end based on current level of expenditure and income. 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 vacancies, sickness and to support the service where staff are working on additional income generation projects.
- Included in the salary figure is the cost of three Technical Officer's.
- A Technical Officer recruited July 18 (2 year fixed term contract) to support delivery of additional income generation via Primary Authority. It has been agreed this officer will be funded by partner councils on the current partner percentage basis.
- A Technical Officer to work on the new licensing laws for animal activities, projected recruitment mid Jan 19. This officer will be funded by partner councils based on the number of animal licences within each council, the income for animal activity licensing will be realised in Councils general licensing income.
- Technical Officer to carry out additional work on Gull Control for Worcester City, projected recruitment mid Feb 19 (2 year fixed term contract) this officer will be recharged to Worcester City only.

Agenda Item 4

These figures have been included in the projected outturn income figure.

- It is anticipated there will be a projected overspend on pest control 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.

Redditch	£5k
Wychavon	£2k
Wyre Forest	£1k

This income is included in the income projected outturn.

- The following is the actual bereavements costs Apr – Dec 18 to be funded by partners. These costs are charged on an as and when basis. Due to the nature of the charge it is not possible to project a final outturn figure:-

Redditch	£6k
Malvern	£4k
Worcs City	£9k
Bromsgrove	£1k

This income is included in the income projected outturn.

- Appendix 2 shows the detail of the income achieved by WRS April – Dec 18.
- 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 18	Expenditure to Dec 18	Variance	Projected outturn	Projected Outturn Variance	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Direct Expenditure							
Employees							
Salary	2,534	1,901	1,782	-119	2,412	-122	The underspend is made up of a combination of vacancies, maternity, long term sick etc. Spend includes £19k cost to support delivery of additional income generation work via primary authority, £7k cost for additional work in new animal activity licenses and £3k for additional gull work for Worcs City only. These additional charges are recharged back to partners and is reflected in the income line.
Agency Staff	0	0	69	69	93	93	
Employee Insurance	40	30	30	-0	40	0	
Sub-Total - Employees	2,574	1,930	1,880	-50	2,544	-30	
Premises							
Rent / Hire of Premise	54	41	39	-1	54	-0	
Cleaning	1	1	1	-0	1	-0	
Utilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Sub-Total - Premises	55	41	40	-1	55	-0	
Transport							
Vehicle Hire	13	9	1	-8	1	-11	
Vehicle Fuel	8	6	3	-3	5	-4	
Road Fund Tax	1	1	0	-0	1	0	
Vehicle Insurance	5	4	4	0	5	0	
Vehicle Maintenance	3	2	1	-1	3	0	
Car Allowances	87	65	55	-11	72	-15	Mainly due to impact of reduction in mileage undertaken by officers. This figure can fluctuate depending on demand.
Sub-Total - Transport	116	87	64	-24	86	-30	
Supplies and Services							
Furniture & Equipment	30	22	32	10	55	25	Purchased particulate monitoring kit £8k, which will also be an income generator. Access to work equipment £6k. Due to increase in number of taxi licenses and the increase in cost of raw materials it is projected equipment purchase will be overspent by £9k. Calibration of noise monitoring kit £7k. Purchase of point source modelling software to support contract work £2k
Clothes, uniforms and laundry	2	2	1	-1	7	5	Purchase of PPE for participation in multi agency and night time economy interventions £6k
Printing & Photocopying	17	13	15	2	20	3	
Postage	11	8	10	2	14	3	
ICT	40	30	45	15	47	7	This profile is uneven due to purchase of annual licences. There is a slight overspend this year due to one off bills from oracle and edrms test system.
Telephones	21	12	11	-0	22	1	
Training & Seminars	24	14	14	-0	24	0	
Insurance	5	3	3	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	293	212	239	27	338	44	

	Full year Budget	Budget 9 Months to Dec 18	Expenditure to Dec 18	Variance	Projected outturn	Projected Outturn Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Direct Expenditure						
Contractors						
Dog Warden	145	109	121	12	148	3 Vacancies within the dog warden team, has meant we have had to be reliant upon external contractors. Posts now recruited to.
Pest Control	47	35	43	8	55	8 Climate conditions favourable to wasps during summer months, projected overspend to partners £9k.
Taxi / Alcohol & Other Licensing	65	49	61	12	90	25 Due to increase in number of taxi licenses, both drivers and vehicles, which necessitates additional raw materials and additional DBS checks which are currently not accounted for. Cost of additional taxi test at Worcs City due to change in policy £8k, which will be recovered from partner and is offset in the income line.
Other contractors/consultants	3	2	0	-2	2	-1
Water Safety	5	4	5	2	7	2
Food Safety	2	2	0	-1	1	-1
Environmental Protection	12	9	39	30	46	34 Bereavement / Works in Default to be charged to relevant partners, offset in Income
Grants / Subscriptions	11	8	9	1	11	1
Advertising, Publicity and Promotion	6	4	4	-0	7	1
Sub-Total	295	221	284	62	366	71
Income						
Training Courses / Bereavement / Works in Default / Sewer Baiting etc	-309	-232	-278	-46	-366	-57 Additional income relating to the enhanced services as detailed above
Sub-Total	-309	-232	-278	-46	-366	-57
Total	3,025	2,261	2,228	-32	3,023	-2

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

40.22%

Grant Funded Spend	Spend 18-19	Remaining Reserve Balance	Funded By	
Health & Well Being	9	16	Primary Care Trust	Conditional
Worcs Works Well	5	37	Public Health Dept	Unconditional
LEP	27	40	Worcestershire Local Enterprise	Unconditional
Better Business For all	4	6	Regulatory Delivery	Unconditional
County Buyout	0	173		Unconditional
Grant Income	-45			
Total	0	272		

Income from Partners	April to Dec 18
	£
Budget	2,268,750
Bereavement/ Public Burials	19,368
Marlpool - Redditch	3,365
Caerwedros - Wychavon	7,000
Pest Control Overspend - Wychavon / Wyre Forest & Redditch	6,900
Taxi Tests - Worcs City	6,300
Employee for Primary Authority Work - July - Dec 189	12,719
	<u>2,324,402</u>
Grant Income	
Severn Trent - Sewer Baiting	9,000
	<u>9,000</u>
Other Income	
Stray Dog Income	75,036
County - Mgmt / Admin / Legal etc	40,983
Intelligence Services	5,306
Planning Support Work	13,244
Contaminated Land Work	25,224
PPC Work	6,694
Primary Authority work	2,082
Primary Authority work	2,513
Training / Risk Assessments of Water Supplies / Burials etc	2,188
Young Solutions - Taxi CSE Training	3,087
Vet Fee Inspection Costs Recovered	10,960
Licensing - Pre-App Advice	1,019
Food Training Courses / Certificates / Food Hygiene Rating	10,352
Ad-Hoc	1,108
Ad-Hoc	13,500
	<u>213,296</u>
Total Income Cum to Dec 18	<u>2,546,698</u>
2018/19 Base Budget from Partners	-2,268,750
Total Income Excluding Budget	277,948

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WRS Board 14th February 2019

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Service Plan 2019/20

Recommendations

- (i) That members of the Board approve the WRS service plan for 2019/20
- (ii) That members of the Board specifically note the level of work to be undertaken by the service this year in relation to the partners' 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.

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Delivery for other local authorities remains a key income generation strategy, supported by work for the private sector and specific grant monies. Whilst the service has yet to be impacted by competitors entering the market pace, 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 albeit one member of the management team will be on maternity leave for much of the year and the remaining members of the team will pick up her workload.

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 current position in areas like IT provision and development, staffing levels, and our reliance on contractual relationships for income.

As with last year, 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. Members are particularly asked to note the proposed numbers of inspections and similar activities proposed for the new financial year that will be undertaken to discharge the statutory duties of the 6 partners in relation to food control.

Financial Implications

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

Sustainability

NA

Contact Points

Simon Wilkes
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Email Address:simon.wilkes@worcsregservices.gov.uk

Background Papers

Service Plan 2018/19 including Risk Register

Service Plan

2019/20

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 2019/20 with a total agreed budget from the district partners of £3.017M. The financial contributions from partners remain static, other than a minor change for Worcester City around accounting practices for taxi vehicle licenses. Partners have not requested savings this year, although we know that at least one will require some reduction in their contribution going into 2020/21. The cash standstill situation does not account for increasing costs in salaries and inflation, which will have to be met through increased income. Partners have recognised that. If the income generation strategy begins to plateau, the situation with contributions will need to be revisited.

The 3-year business plan, which has a number of strands for continuing the Service's development, was revised last year and remains fit for purpose for the next 12 months. Further work will be required and a further revision is likely going into 2020/21. Having said this, the service will continue to review and develop opportunities for commercial activities to bring in additional income. Primary Authority partnerships are likely to be a key area for development in the coming 2 years as the services looks to obtain more agreements to meet the challenge of the "invest to save" approach agreed by partners, which saw an additional member of staff being recruited. The service will also continue to pursue work for other local authorities 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 ninth 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 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/22 however the operational detail reflects the planned activities that the service will undertake in 2019/20 only in recognition of the on-going uncertainty of local government finances in general and those of the service in particular.

2018/19 was again very busy and successful for WRS. The service managed to maintain the majority of local authority customers and increased its Primary Authority portfolio, with notable firsts in terms of agreements with businesses for Environmental Permitting support. This very much reflects the service's leading position in this technical area. In these financially challenging times, officers have continued to deliver excellent work with a number of legal files being prepared for prosecution this year including at least one against large national businesses. 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 and increasing the volume of published 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 tailoring information to enable the public to self-serve which will continue as we look at ways to allow members of the public to make requests through the website which automatically load into our back office systems. Following the full revision of the licensing pages on the six partner websites, we will continue to develop and maintain these going forward.

2. OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

At the national level the external environment in which Local Government operates continues to face unprecedented financial challenges. The fact that the seven local authorities in Worcestershire have been accepted for a 75% business rate retention pilot may provide some respite from this and the service will look at developing projects that might allow it to bid for some of these funds. The BREXIT process continues to create uncertainty for the local business community particularly local exporters as we will become a third country on departure and, without a trade deal, there may be more regulatory barriers to overcome. We already provide certification to food businesses exporting outside of the EU. This may increase if there is a hard BREXIT.

The combined authority in the West Midlands conurbation continues to be a focus for economic development from Government. With plans for business development along the M42 corridor, it seems likely that there will be economic benefits arising from this for those districts bordering the route. With HS2 continuing and Worcester Parkway station coming on-line in the near future, it seems highly likely that Worcestershire will become of greater interest for businesses looking to relocate or develop new bases in the UK.

Government's approach to regulation is encapsulated in the Cabinet Office's Regulatory Futures review, and includes:

- Embracing outcome based approaches to regulation,
- Increasing reliance on self-assurance and earned recognition,
- Having charging regimes such that business pays the cost of regulation,
- Ensuring better information and data sharing between regulators.

The Food Standards Agency is, of our associated regulatory bodies, furthest down the road to reform and this could lead to dramatic changes to inspection regimes or other programmes where accredited, private sector, third party audit will replace inspection by local authority or government officials. This could leave the public sector to deal with the most serious cases of non-compliance as they arise, although it seems unlikely that smaller businesses will be in a position to avail themselves of some of these earned recognition systems.

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.

The Better Business for All philosophy developed by BEIS's Regulatory Delivery arm (now called the Office for Product Safety and Standards) will continue to inform our approach to the regulation of legitimate traders. Whilst local business continue to have a limited appetite for paying local regulators for the advice that they have received previously without charge, the Primary Authority scheme, where the advice given is deemed assured and there are additional potential protections for businesses if this advice is followed remains popular with larger businesses and the service will continue to look to grow this area of work. Government sees this as a key regulatory tool for achieving compliance and growth

at a local level for strategic businesses. We will also continue to work with bodies like the Worcestershire LEP to engage with businesses where possible.

The risk to our potential income streams suggested last year, 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 has yet to occur. However, it is a threat that we must remain aware of. We will continue to watch the development of Publica, the company owned by two Gloucestershire & one Oxfordshire district as this is the nearest threat locally.

The budget for 2019/20 is agreed at £3.017M. This slight change has resulted from a small change in licensing processes in Worcester City that means taxi testing fees will no longer form part of the WRS financial allocation. To achieve this target, WRS has set itself a very stretching 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. Members have agreed that minor shortfalls in the next year can be covered by the service's reserve so that further thought can be given and action taken to resolve this funding dilemma.

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.

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The team will continue to work with planning colleagues to improve the efficiency of these service areas. Helping planners to understand when to consult their WRS colleagues on particular matters will streamline their processes and create more capacity within WRS to deal with those applications or planning matters that require more detailed appraisal and support income generation work.

The development of technology, and increased use of the internet to commit and facilitate crime, continues to pose a threat to local authorities who are often ill-equipped to investigate such matters. A particular threat involves the use of social media as persons or business use websites such as Facebook or Twitter to advertise services or sell products they are not legally allowed to offer. This includes an increasing number of people using Facebook 'buy and sell' pages to advertise taxi services or business advertising animal boarding establishments, without holding the required licences. Another example includes the continued sale of dogs through various websites where the dog has incorrect or misleading documentation, missing vaccinations or has been illegally imported. There has been a continued increase in people using social media to either find a lost dog or locate the owner of a dog they have found to be straying. As a result, dogs can be held in potentially unsafe environments or be returned to individuals who don't actually own the dog.

App-based taxi and private hire booking systems are becoming more prevalent both locally and nationally. This brings with it challenges as the legislation regulating taxi and private hire services, as referenced previously, is ageing and not suited for modern technological advancements. App-based booking systems also facilitate more instant "pre-bookings" which blur the lines between the taxi and private hire trades. App-based booking systems working across a number of district Council areas also help to facilitate a greater prevalence of "cross-border" hiring's, which poses a number of regulatory challenges.

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.

WRS 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. 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 within the shared service

3. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In 2011, the Government tasked what was then the Local Better Regulation Office (now the Office for Product Safety and Standards, 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 OPSS, 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 local, regional and national data, and this is used to help identify the key issues to be tackled over a 2-year period, with an annual sense check to

ensure the environment has not changed significantly. The priorities identified in the Strategic Assessment are 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 defensible.

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 2019/20 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 assurances. 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.

The service's ability to provide bespoke support to individual partners is highlighted by the work done with task and finish groups of the City Council's Environmental Health and Licensing Committee, particularly the one on Air Quality. Whilst the service could not support this kind of activity for all partners at the same time, we do hope to be able to offer this type of work more widely when it can be scheduled. Engaging with the City in this way and with projects like the future vision for Worcester has helped to build and maintain relationships with officers at the City Council and helped to highlight the important role of regulation when looking at wider, long term policy development.

7. ACTIVITIES & OUTCOME MEASURES

The service's IT system allows accurate reporting 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, with one or two notable exceptions, we have seen improvement or maintenance of most of these indicators, which we hope will continue in 2019/20. Concerns still remain around the non-business customer satisfaction figures and work will continue to try to improve these during the coming year.

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	<p>Ensuring that nuisance and other pollution related issues are tackled</p>	<p>Respond to complaints and take appropriate action</p> <p>Provide relevant advice and information, available through a range of channels.</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>	<p>2, 3 and 4</p>	<p>% of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction</p> <p>Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population</p>
3	<p>Protecting the environment and the public through monitoring air quality, and ensuring that contaminated land is suitable for development.</p> <p>Controlling environmental emissions leading to reduced environmental damage and better health</p>	<p>Conduct risk based/ intelligence-led interventions with businesses, especially permitted premises</p> <p>Air quality monitoring & responding to contaminated land issues</p> <p>Supporting the planning system</p>	<p>I want to assume everything is ok</p>	<p>2 and 4</p>	<p>% permitted businesses broadly compliant at first visit/ inspection</p> <p>Monitoring of the County-wide Air Quality strategy is delivered</p> <p>% of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction</p>
4	<p>Licensed premises cause no significant alcohol-fuelled crime/ disorder and ASB.</p> <p>Page 29</p>	<p>Respond to complaints regarding alcohol and similar licensing related issues e.g. underage sales, breach of conditions, poor conduct of licence holders, etc.</p> <p>Provide businesses with advice and assistance</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>	<p>1 and 3</p>	<p>% of licensed businesses subject to allegations of not upholding the 4 licensing objectives</p>
5	<p>Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers Licence applications are processed in a timely manner and that all drivers and operators granted licenses meet the fit and proper test.</p> <p>Vehicles in use by the Taxi trades are fit whilst in service</p>	<p>Safeguard and ensure that all licence applications are processed in a timely manner and those granted meet the fit and proper test.</p> <p>Undertake a number of enforcement interventions to test compliance</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>	<p>1 and 3</p>	<p>% of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days.</p> <p>Vehicles requiring work or taken off the road following intervention (Number and % of the total fleet.)</p>

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>	<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</p>	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>	<p>I want to assume everything is ok</p>	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 service 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 2018/19 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 2019/20 (based on the Food Hygiene rating system.): 1189

Estimated number of premises scheduled for alternative approaches to inspection during 2019/20: 172

Estimated number of new registrations/ unrated premises that will require inspection during 2019/20: 589

Estimated number of overdue premises assessed as requiring a visit during 2019/20: 445

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 2019/20.

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 and recent improvements in data extraction have increased the frequency with which a number of measures can be reported. 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. Three teams operate on a geographical split covering Redditch/ Bromsgrove, Wychavon/Malvern Hills, Worcester City/ Wyre Forest. The teams rotate around the three geographical areas on a quarterly basis so officers experience and become familiar with the whole county. The geographical teams are organised to reflect the balance of demand across the County. 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 officer in this role is likely to be on maternity leave for much of 2019/20 so the work is being shared across the Management team.

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 2019/20. 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 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. We ran a number of food forums and other training sessions during last year that were attended by officers from outside of the County.

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.

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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 and this will hopefully come to fruition in the first half of 2019/20. 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 responsible for 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 2019/20 and beyond at a suitable level to make sure that funding can be accessed if it is available. This will be particularly relevant if the Government's review of the LEPs requires that the three partners in the North of the county have to members of only one LEP.

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:

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- 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 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

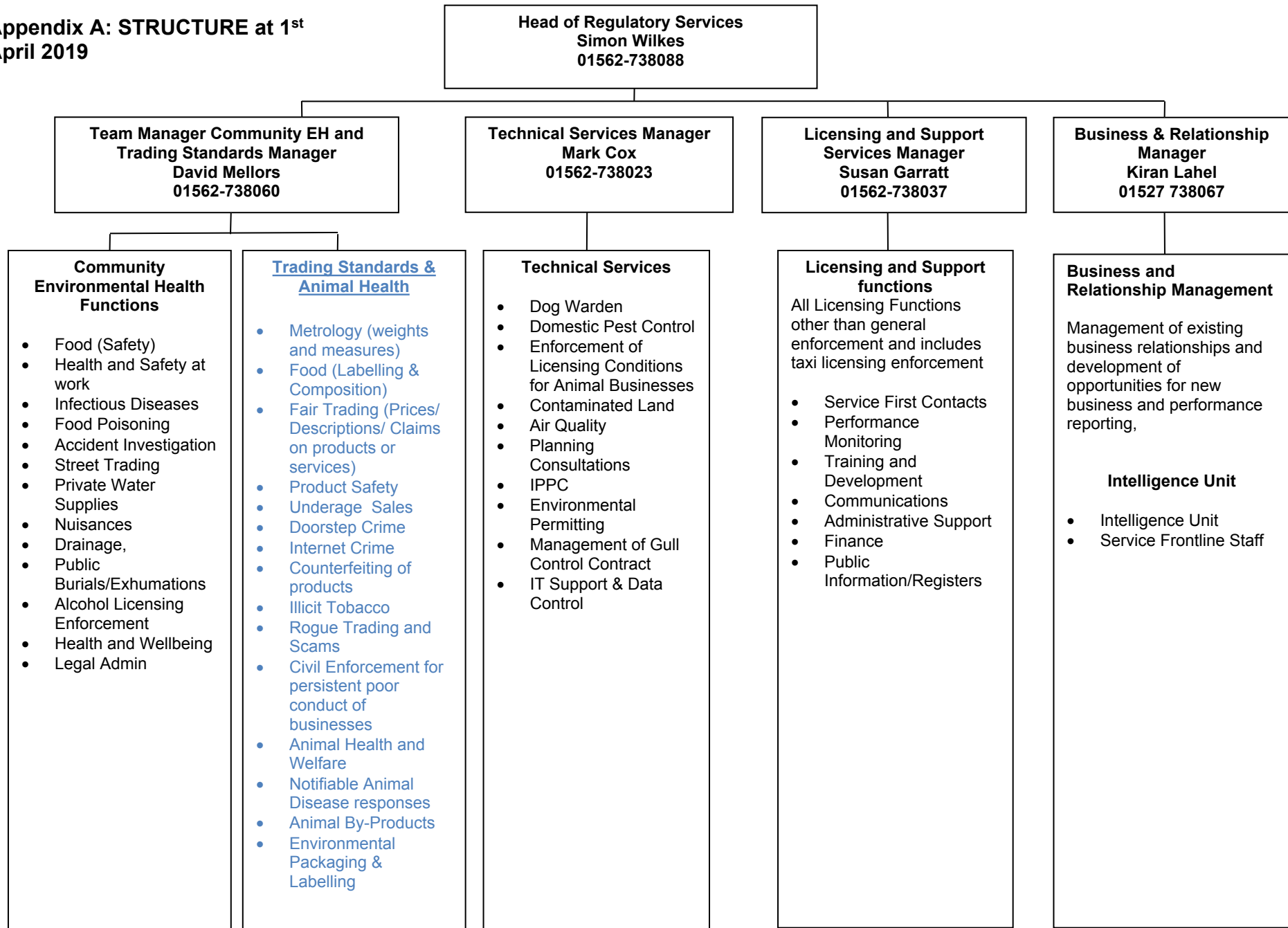
At the June 2015 meeting of the previous Joint Committee, it was agreed that the majority of the terms of the original 2010 partnership agreement remained relevant to the six district partnership following the exit of the County Council in 2016), as this should be used as the basis for the continued 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.

The original legal agreement indicated that partners would pursue the shared services model for a period of at least 10 years. The 2016 agreement re-iterated this and it contains no formal end date. Officers have asked the Legal Officers from the partner councils to look at this and advise on whether any review or re-signing of agreements is required. At this stage, the view from the majority of Legal Officers is that this is not required and that the current agreement can, in theory continue in perpetuity.

17. RISKS

A copy of the current Risk Register is appended at Appendix D and has been reviewed and updated for this plan. The increased number of commercial contracts and obligations increases 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 2019**



Appendix B: 3 years of budgets (figures in £000's)

	2019 / 2020	2020 / 2021	2021 / 2022
Employees			
Monthly salaries	2,695	2,709	2,732
Training for professional qualifications	2	2	2
Medical fees (employees')	2	2	2
Employers' liability insurance	40	40	40
Employees' professional subscriptions	3	3	3
Sub-Total - Employees	2,741	2,755	2,778
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	5	5	5
Van Lease	9	9	9
Fares & Car Parking	5	5	5
Car allowances	75	75	75
Sub-Total - Transport	110	110	110
Supplies & Service			
Equipment - purchase/maintenance/rental	23	23	23
Materials	9	9	9
Clothing, uniforms & laundry	2	2	2
Training fees	23	23	23

General insurances	5	5	5
Printing and stationery	18	18	18
Books and publications	2	2	2
Postage/packaging	11	11	11
ICT	40	40	40
Telephones	21	21	21
Taxi Tests	22	22	22
CRB Checks (taxi)	26	26	26
Support service recharges	100	100	100
Support service recharges - ICT	44	44	44
Sub-Total - Supplies & Service	345	345	345
Contractors			
Consultants / Contractors' fees/charges/SLA's	239	239	239
Advertising (general)	5	5	5
Grants and subscriptions	11	11	11
Marketing/promotion/publicity	2	2	2
Sub-Total - Contractors	257	257	257
Income			
Grants / Primary Authority / Food Training / Contaminated Land / Stray Dogs / Ad Hoc	-410	-410	-410
Sub-Total - Income	-410	-410	-410
From partners for Technical Officers	-79	-52	-36
Sub-Total - Income	-79	-52	-36
Additional Income			
Income to be found due to unavoidable salary pressures		-41	-80
Sub-Total - Income	0	-41	-80
DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP BUDGET	3,017	3,017	3,017

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 0 1 or 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. 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. The last figure obtained by the host's HR team was that the Public sector average was 8.75
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	Expressed as a % of the base district contributions to the revenue budget for this year
14	Cost of regulatory services per head of population	Annually	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 2019/20

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 for disaster recovery.
Issues with the WRS database system	Impact on work planning. Self-help may not enable savings required	On-going	Low	High	Green	The system continues to be developed as business as usual, with priority currently going to public access and self-help/ self-service to continue the channel shift process. Service website remains key access point.
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 over Christmas period is operable.
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. Agency staff are available to provide short term cover. 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, BDC considering revision to finance system that should help.
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	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. .
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. FSA audit showed Agency happy with WRS direction of travel and use of intelligence even though not Code of Practice compliant. 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 being 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



WRS Board 14th February 2019

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 2018/19 and whilst the detail of the report focuses on Q3, 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 Board on 1st April 2016.

Report

Activity Data

As usual, licensing and environmental health nuisances continue to provide the greatest demand on officer time, which is understandable given their direct impact on the public.

For nuisance, the Summer demand peaked with the excellent weather but, as the weather broke during August, rates of complaint began to fall and continued at a level below that of the previous two years. Since the weather in this period was no better or worse than other years, it is difficult to explain why the numbers were lower. It could be that more issues were dealt with by people helping themselves but we cannot confirm this.

A similar pattern occurred with the number of complaints relating to filthy and verminous premises and other public health matters. Again it is difficult to explain why this should be the case but, as with the nuisance complaints, this could simply be natural variation.

A peak in food complaints and enquiries in August followed the pattern of the previous year and, like other areas, dropped significantly in September. These falls have allowed staff to catch up with the proactive food inspections so more of these were done in Q3 this year than in previous years. This helps to demonstrate how we respond flexibly with our resources and also highlights



that when resources are tight, proactive activities do take a back seat.

Health and Safety work also kept the team busy through the summer and whilst there was a drop off in complaints during the Autumn, accident reports remained slightly above trend compared with the same period in the past 2 years.

Other areas like Licensing, requests and applications, remained on trend, along with information requests. However, having seen a significant peak during the summer months, planning requests showed another significant peak during the mid-late Autumn, making it very busy for the Technical Services team, particularly as they were also trying to finalise some important Primary authority arrangements.

Performance

Sickness figures have increased slightly to 3.26 days per FTE, which is 0.5 days per FTE more than at the end of Q2. Hence, we remain on target for significantly better figures than last year and hopefully below the level in 2016/17.

In terms of our cumulative performance measures, business satisfaction is up slightly again to 96.1% so heading back towards where we have been historically. Broadly compliant food businesses remain around the 98% mark (97.7 %,) continuing to demonstrate that food businesses across the county are well run.

Overall customer satisfaction (non-business customers,) remains at 61% at the end of December. The proportion who feel better equipped to deal with problems in the future has improved from 56% at the end of September to 59% at the end of December.

The Management Team is continuing to review the questionnaire returns each quarter. So far there is little to report beyond what was said at the last board meeting:

- that the majority of people who are not happy with the outcome relates to nuisance issues that don't reach the threshold for statutory nuisance and these people tend to report dissatisfaction against all of our questions no matter how well or otherwise an officer has performed,
- That on some occasions our officers are not keeping complainants as well informed as we would expect and Team Managers have been challenged to deal with this behaviour and ensure that customers are updated and informed properly of the outcome.

78 compliments have not been received against 23 complaints, a similar ratio to previous years in spite of the dip in customer satisfaction.

Contact Points

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01562 738023
mark.cox@worcsregservices.gov.uk

Background Papers

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

Agenda Item 6

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	72.1	60.1	61%	
2. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	92.4	95.5	96.1%	
3. % businesses broadly compliant at first assessment/ inspection	Annually	98.2	Bromsgrove 98 Malvern Hills 97.1 Redditch 96.8 Worcester City 98.2 Wychavon 97.8 Wyre Forest 98.1 Worcestershire 97.7	NA	
4. % of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 st April each year	Annually	1.8	Bromsgrove 2 Malvern Hills 2.9 Redditch 3.2 Worcester City 1.8 Wychavon 2.2 Wyre Forest 1.9 Worcestershire 2.3	NA	
5 % of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days of receipt of a complete application	6-monthly	NA	91.2	NA	
6 % of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service Number of vehicles found to be defective by district and the percentage this represents of the fleet county-wide	6-monthly	NA	Bromsgrove 1 Malvern Hills 0 Redditch 12 Worcester City 2 Wyre Forest 2 17/1429 vehicles county-wide =1.2% of fleet	NA	
7 % of service	Quarterly	63.6	56	59	

Agenda Item 6

	requests where customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future	NB: fig is cumulative				
8	Review of register of complaints/compliments	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	6/22	15/56	23/78	
9	Annual staff sickness absence at public sector average or better	Quarterly NB: figure is cumulative	1.83 days/ FTE	2.77 days/ FTE	3.26 days per FTE	
10	% of staff who enjoy working for WRS	Annually	NA	NA	NA	
11	% of licensed businesses subject to allegations of not upholding the 4 licensing objectives	6-monthly	NA	Bromsgrove 2.6 Malvern Hills 2.0 Redditch 4.0 Worcester City 3.6 Wychavon 2.4 Wyre Forest 2.6 Worcestershire 2.8	NA	
12	Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population	6-monthly	NA	Bromsgrove 1.6 Malvern Hills 1.4 Redditch 2.2 Worcester City 2.1 Wychavon 1.4 Wyre Forest 1.6 Worcestershire 1.7	NA	
13	Total income expressed as a % of district base revenue budget (16/17)	6-monthly	NA	140,817/3,025,000 x100 =4.7%	NA	
14	Cost of regulatory services per head of	Annually	NA	NA	NA	

Agenda Item 6

population (Calculation will offset income against revenue budget)					
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Worcestershire
Regulatory Services
Supporting and protecting you

Activity Report 2018/19

(April to September)



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Malvern
Hills
District Council
www.malvernhills.gov.uk

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL
making
a
difference
www.redditchbc.gov.uk

Worcester
CITY COUNCIL

WYCHAVON
DISTRICT COUNCIL
good services, good value

Wyre Forest
District Council

Contents

Headlines

WRS Summary

- Air Quality
- Contaminated Land
- Dog Control
- Environmental Permitting
- Food Safety
- Health and Safety
- Information Requests
- Licensing
- Planning
- Pollution
- Public Health

Partner Authority

Summaries

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

Contract Authority

Summaries

Foreword

Welcome to the third set of activity data for 2018/19.

As you'll see our excellent summer crashed into autumn relatively early taking down our numbers of nuisance related complaints and these numbers have remained below the level of previous years for much of the quarter. Food complaints and health and safety complaints remained on trend, all of which has allowed the Community EH team to get on top of the food inspection programme for the year so there should not be the last minute rush to hit target that we usually see.

After the peak in planning work during the Summer for the Technical Services team at a time where they are busy trying to build their portfolio of Primary Authority work, there was a second peak in the middle of this quarter so that team have continued to be busy for most of the period. Stray dog numbers were slightly below last year but slightly above the year before during the same period.

Fortunately, Licensing continued to follow its normal seasonal track and the volume of FOI/EIA Information requests was also on trend.

So there is lots to see in this report and we hope you find it informative.



Simon Wilkes
Head of Regulatory Services

Headlines - Quarter THREE

TEAM ENMESHED WITH NOISE ISSUE

Noise complaints came in from a number of Pershore residents about a heavy impact noise in the surrounding area. On investigating, the noise was from a heavy industrial process that involved banging metal to make mesh. The business had moved onto a new green field industrial site the previous year but this was near to residential properties. WRS suggested the company employ an acoustic consultant to identify a way to resolve the problem and, on the basis of this report, a suitable enclosure around the machines had to be built to prevent a statutory nuisance and reduce the noise impact on local residents. The enclosure cost in the region of £30,000 but hopefully a solution has been found that meets the requirements of both parties. Whilst WRS works with planning colleagues to avoid these issues, where industrial and housing development occurs in close proximity it is very difficult to deal with the expectations of those moving into these areas and balance their wants and needs.



Vychavon-Malvern signed up for documentary filming with Lambent Productions looking at the public health protective role of local authority enforcement officers. WRS accepted an invitation to participate. Two officers volunteered for this work and several food visits have been filmed. Agreement of the food business operator is obtained by the film company. The programme will be shown on C5 in 2019.

Licensing Update

The implementation of the Animal Activity Licence which came into force from the 1st of October 2018 is now well on it's way and to date we have already had over 160 applications under these new 2018 regulations. Officers have been busy carrying out an inspection of each premise as part of the application processes, qualified Officers and in some cases Veterinary Surgeons have to carry out an inspection of the premises and rate its associated risks taking into account client history with compliance, provision for and the welfare of the animals concerned; awarding each premise a star rating of between 1 and 5 stars under which they will now operate. These risk and star ratings then determine the length of time the licence is granted for this being between 1 and 3 years.

This third quarter has also been particularly busy in the number of licensing applications, renewals or reviews being heard by the relevant district Licensing Committee or Sub-Committees. There have been over 30 cases during October, November and December 2018 for which a determination had to be sought by the Committee process through each district. These are cases where Officers cannot grant a licence as the application is outside of the districts policy parameters and therefore cannot be determined by Officers through normal delegated powers or where an application/licence has received objections or where an application has been received to review the premises licence.

Licensing Officers have also conducted a number of enforcement exercises (mates visits) with our partner agencies West Mercia Police, Home Office - Immigration and Enforcement Officers, Fire Authority Officers, Trading Standards Officers as well as our own Environmental Health and Licensing Officers. Those visits conducted were high profile multi agency visits in a number of districts and culminated in a number of arrests, goods being seized including possible illicit alcohol and which also led to the identification of potential fire hazards which have now been corrected.

Licensing Officers alongside Young Solutions (PCC training provider) have continued to deliver on CSE (Child Sex Exploitation) Awareness training to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade both drivers and operators who are licensed by the District Councils within the County. Officers have now arranged for additional sessions to be provided for those drivers who did not manage to get booked on the course during 2018; with the next available sessions being in Redditch during the later half of January 2019.

Dog Warden Update

The dog warden service was busy during the Christmas and New Year period. Seeing over thirty dogs collected between the 22 December and 1st January. Over Christmas itself seven dogs were being treated at the vets for welfare issues, another seven were in Kennels. Twenty nine of the dogs collected have been reunited with their owner or rehomed, with the other remaining in kennels. The dogs below were four of the lucky ones who have been passed to a charity to find them a new home.



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Air Quality & Contaminated Land

The air quality management area in Hagley was revoked following extensive survey work in the village, which confirmed that air quality objective values for NO2 have been achieved for several years in a row. It is anticipated that these improvements have come about through a combination of factors relating to favourable metrological conditions, improved vehicle emissions technology and junction improvements since the declaration in 2010.

Worcester City considered the findings of the consultation of their proposed city wide air quality management area and agreed to proceed with the declaration in December. It is anticipated that the order will be made early in Q4. Members have also been heavily involved in the development of an ambitious air quality management plan for the City which will be considered at the end of January 2019.

Officers have also been liaising with County Highways and Wyre Forest District Council on the highway improvements intended for the Blackwell street roundabout Churchfields area. It is anticipated that delivery of this scheme in 2019 will bring about much needed improvements in air quality as the Horsefair has the highest exceedance of NO2 objectives for the County.

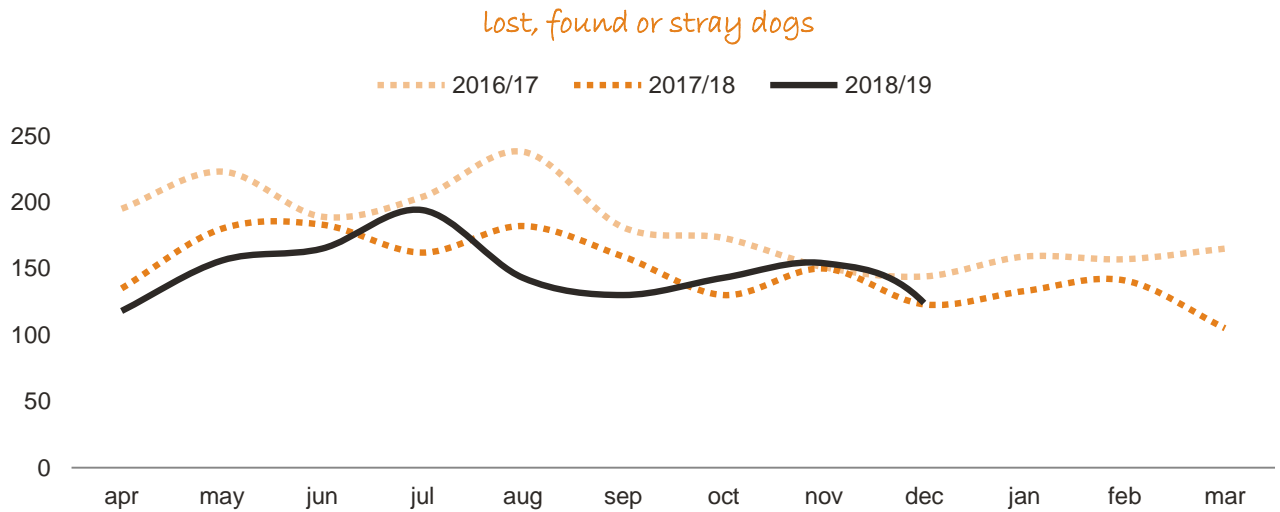
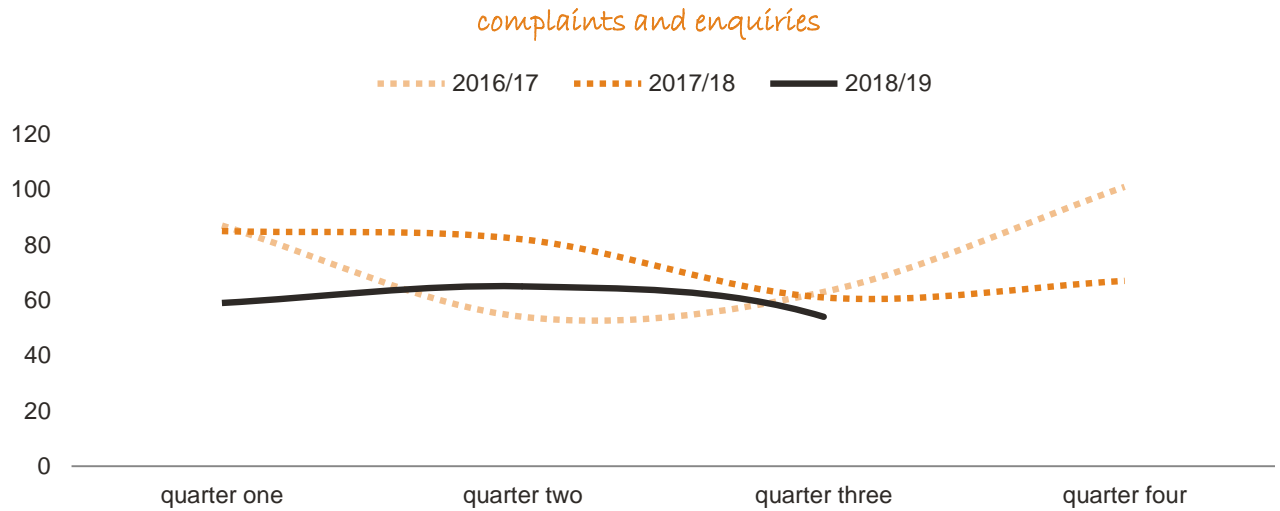
The submission of 2018 ASR's (Air Quality Annual Status Reports) for the districts were also submitted to DEFRA in December in line with government reporting requirements. Report details will be available via the following link: <http://www.worcsregservices.gov.uk/pollution/air-quality/local-air-quality-progress-reports.aspx>

The end of Q3 saw the completion of the landfill gas survey of Pinches landfill site in Wildmoor, Bromsgrove. Informal reporting of the monitoring conducted at the nearest residential receptors confirmed that there was no exposure to the products of landfill gas. Residents and members of the Wildmoor residence association will be given the good news in due course.

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: As with Quarter 2 there continues to be a downward trend in complaints and enquiries. Generally speaking this has been the case with reports of lost, found or stray dogs, however the chart for quarter 3 demonstrates a marginal increase compared to the 2017/8 figures. This may be due to increased accessibility to the phone lines as a result of reduced incoming calls to the service or simply a result of an increase in lost dogs.



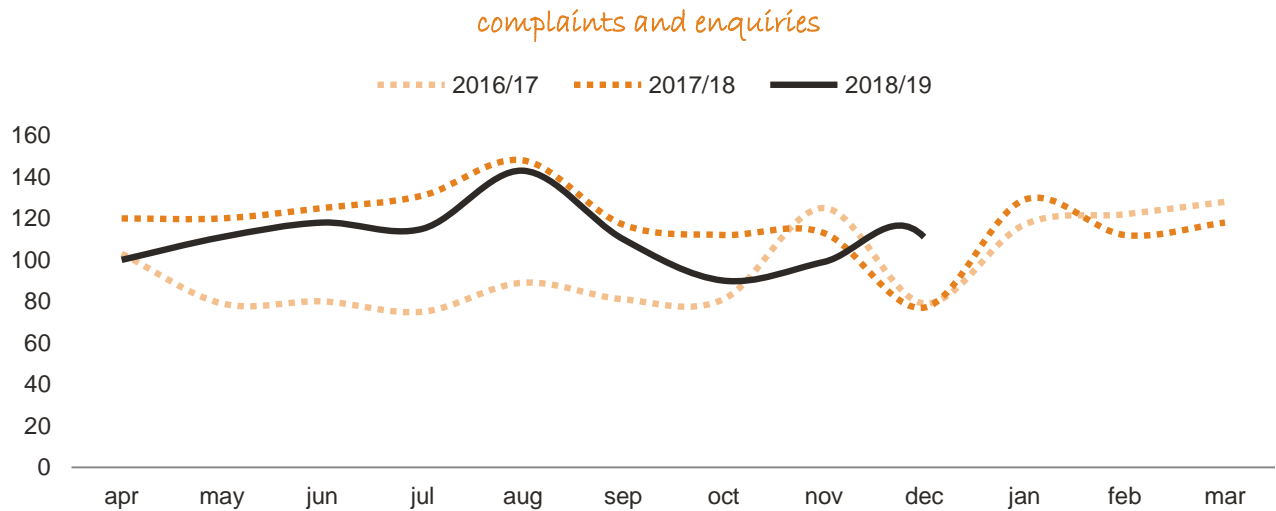
Environmental Permitting

The team have been busy developing our Primary Authority relationships over Q3 with Cemex and Wienerberger and commenced delivery of their work programmes. Liaison meetings have also been conducted with representatives of Welsh authorities with a view of expanding the primary authority relationship into other UK jurisdictions to provide Cemex with comprehensive Primary Authority cover across their business portfolio.

Officers have also been advising the Ministry of Defence on the compliance requirements of the medium sized combustion plant directive which directly affects every military site in the UK. We are currently liaising on this area of work with their projects team and seek to provide the necessary support, make permit applications and deliver emissions compliance.

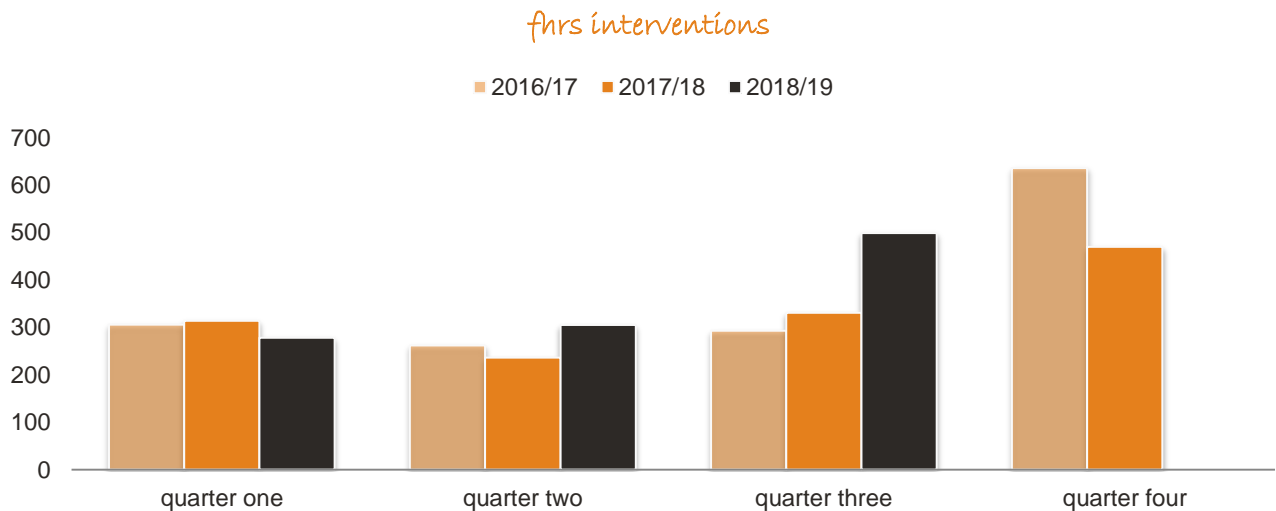
Food Safety

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 complaints about food products, hygiene of premises complaints and requests for business advice. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of interventions conducted by WRS at premises included in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, commonly known as FHRS.



Comments: The quarter introduced a project led approach to food inspections with teams of up to six officers allocated to specific Districts for a one week period. This enables them to entirely focus on food visits for short periods without impacting on their other EH work. Inspections have increased for the quarter and we should be close to completing the whole programme by year end.

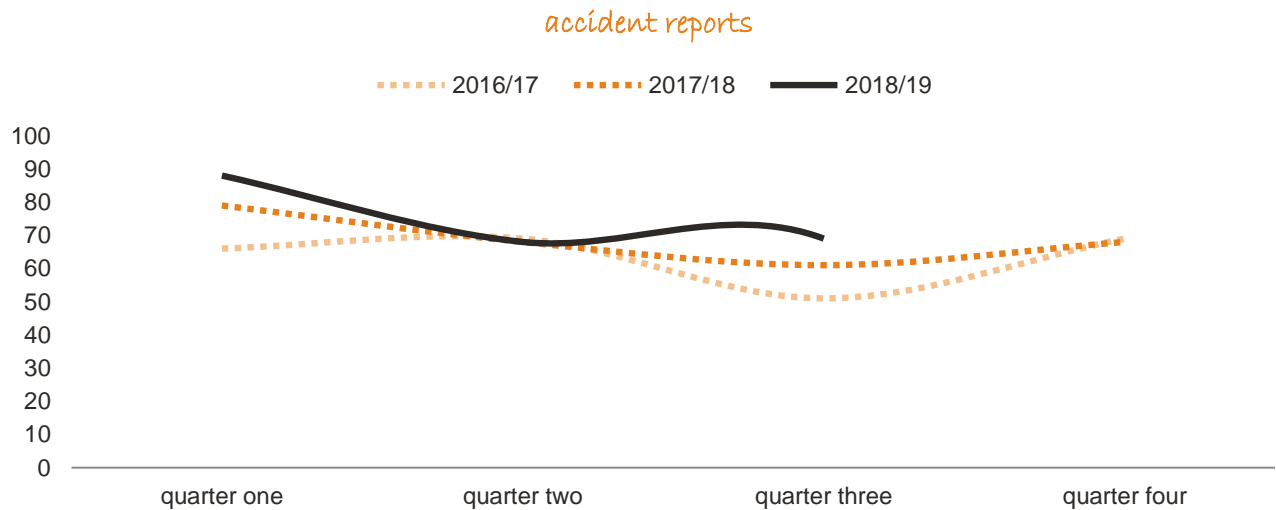
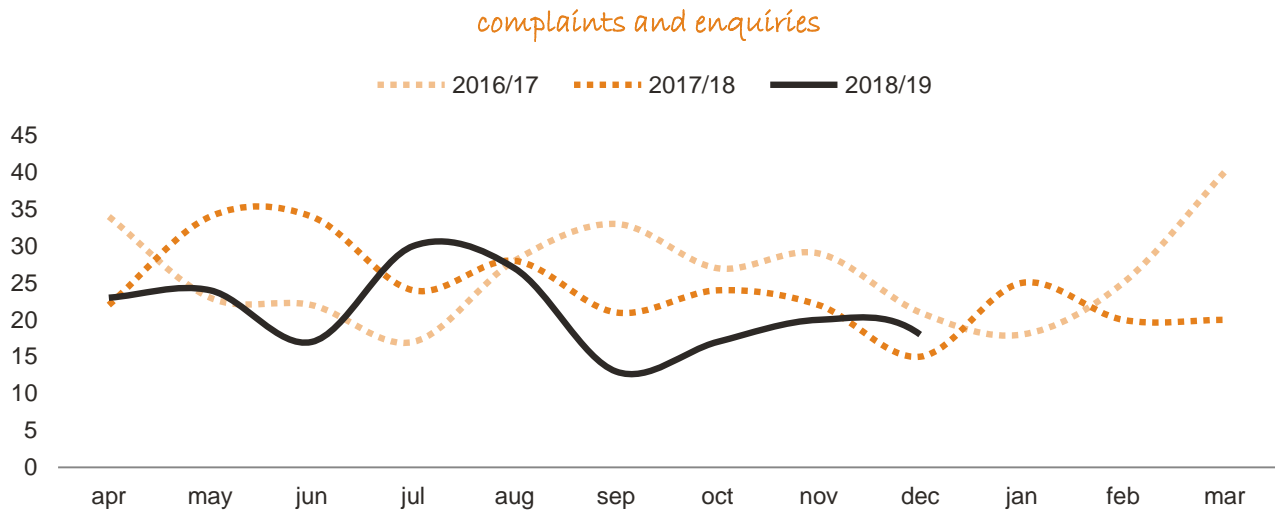
The low risk food premises intervention project continues to bring in good responses and has enabled data base cleansing. The total number of returned self assessment forms for year to date was 248 from 274 sent out. There was one formal food premises closure in Redditch during the period.



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.

Comments: Health and Safety continues to be subject to an intelligence led approach based on accident reports and complaints notified to us. Formal legal proceedings are in progress relating to a large retailer in Wyre Forest and the team are investigating a potentially fatal accident at company in Bromsgrove district where a large two-tier conveyor system was being relocated by warehouse staff and collapsed onto one of them causing life threatening head/neck injuries. A simple caution has also been issued to a large national retail chain formerly operating in Redditch.

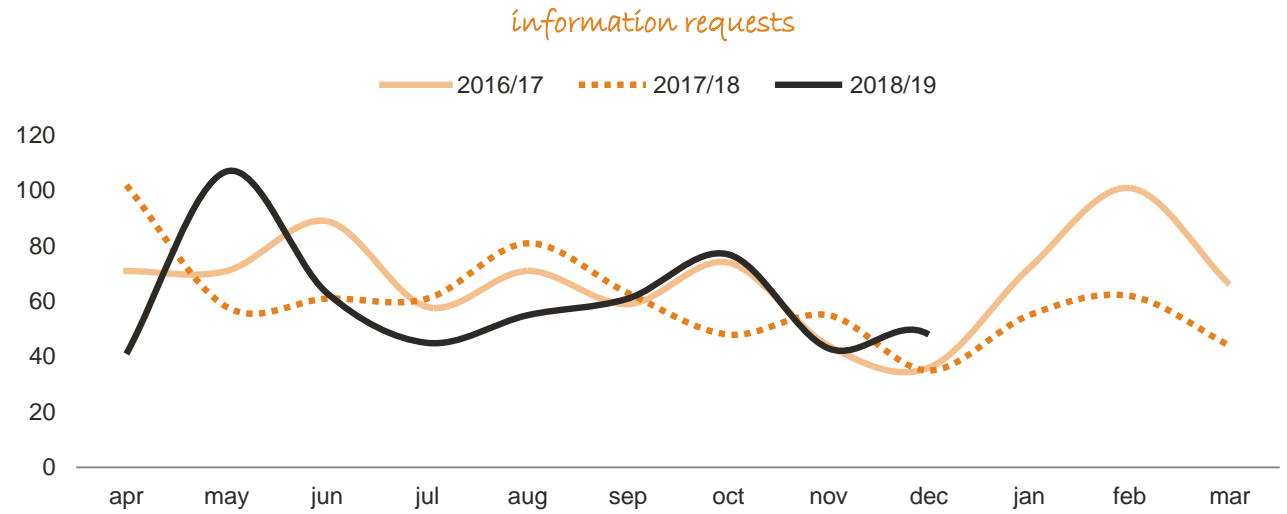


Information Requests

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 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) or the Data Protection Act 2018



Licensing

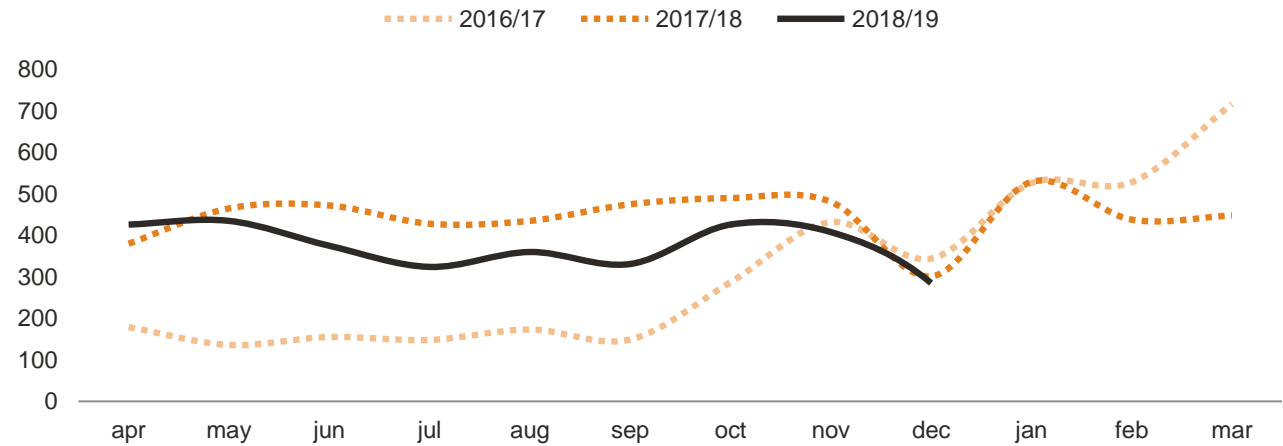
The chart (top right) shows the number complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to licensing. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of licensing applications.

Licensing complaints, enquiries and applications relate to the following;

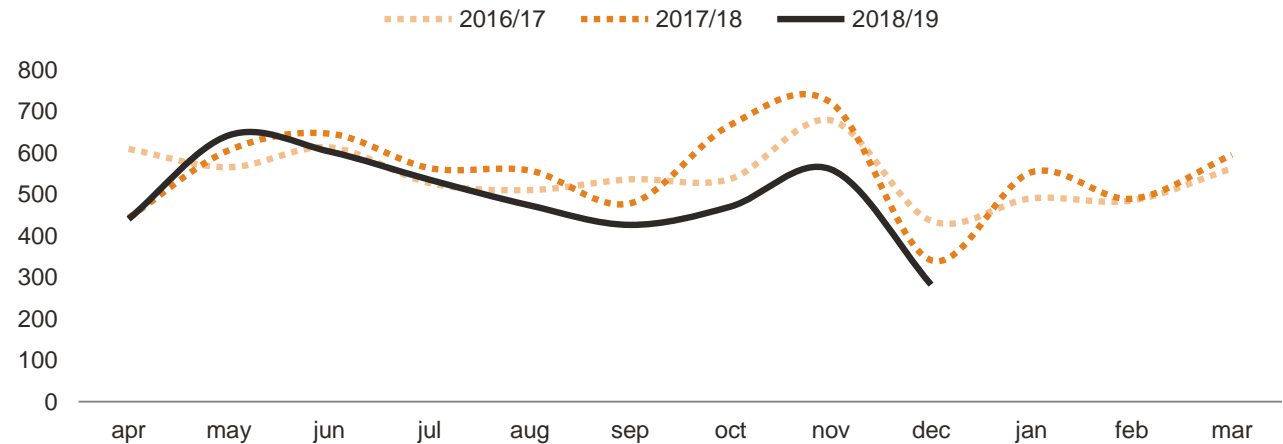
- Alcohol and entertainment (including gambling)
- Animals
- Caravans
- Scrap metal
- Sex establishments
- Skin piercing
- Street trading
- Taxis

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complaints and enquiries



applications

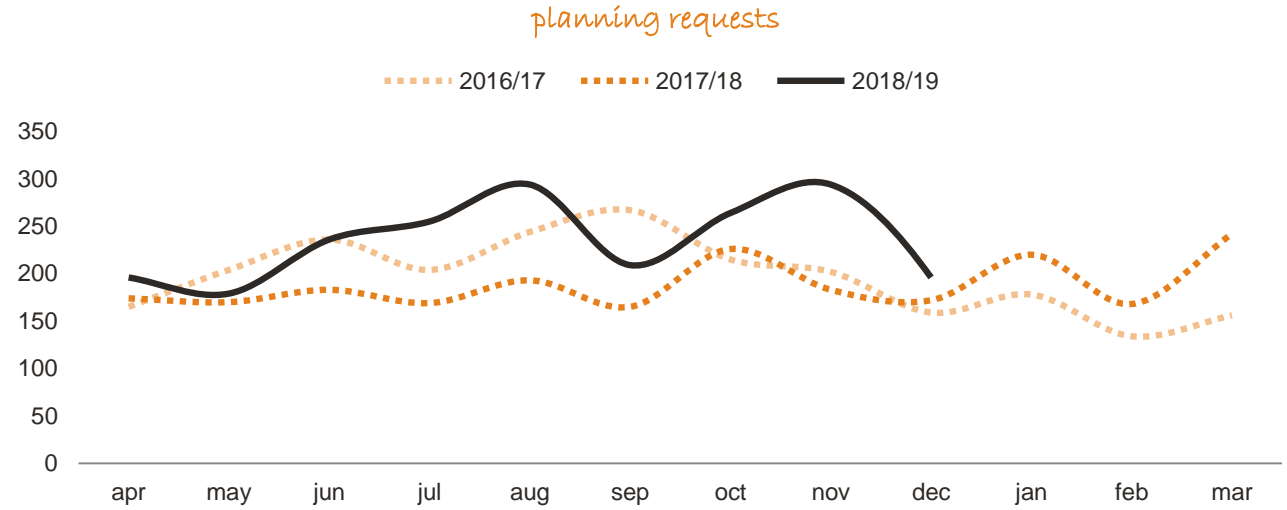


Planning

The chart (right) shows the number of planning requests completed 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;

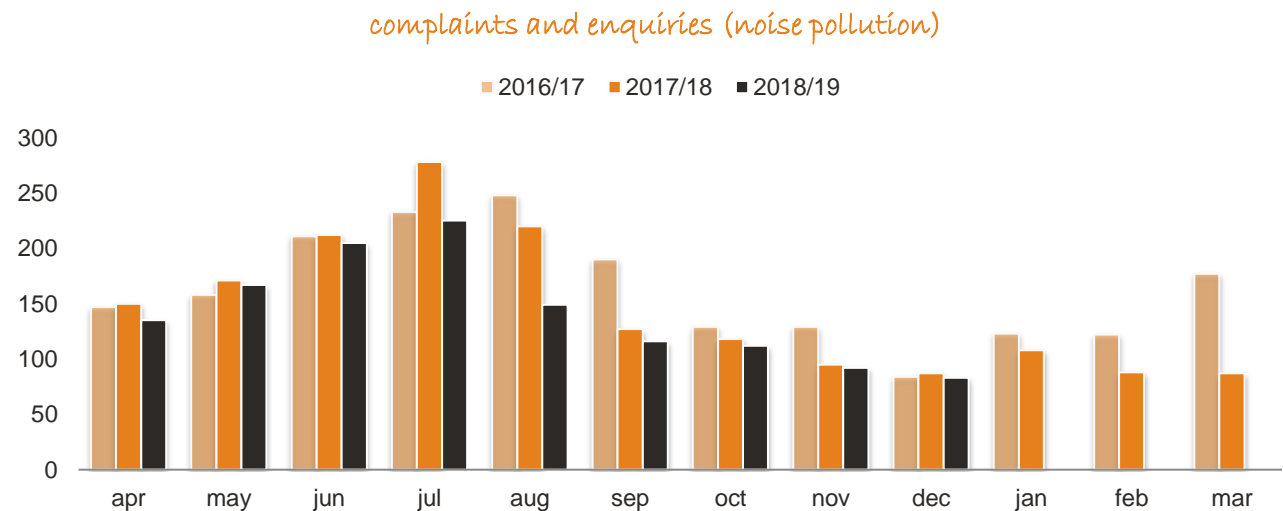
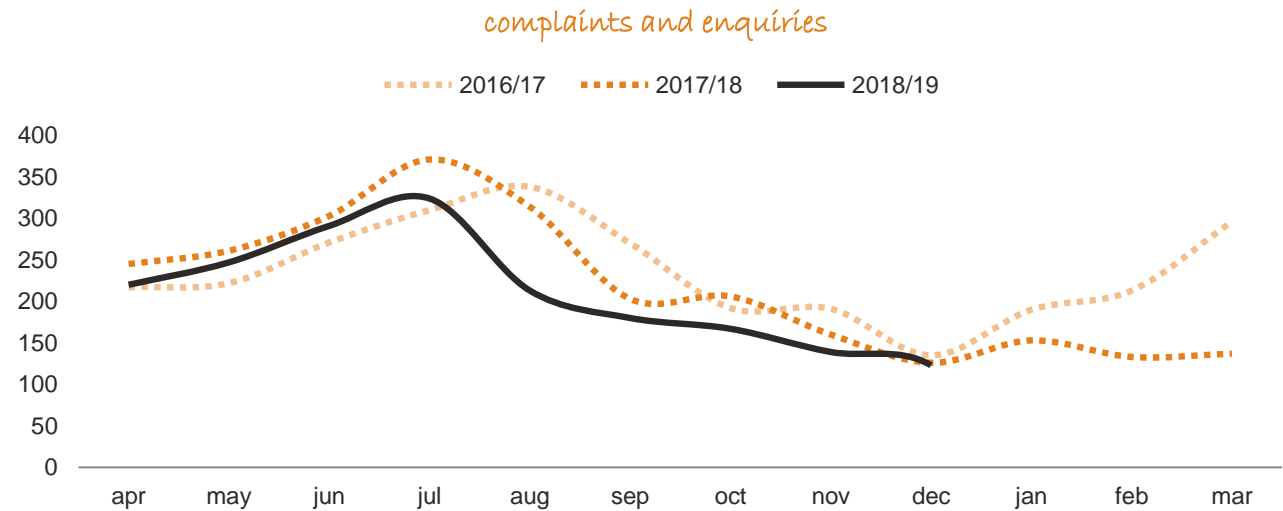
- Air Quality
- Contaminated Land
- Environmental Permitting
- Food
- Health and Safety
- Nuisance / Noise
- Private Water Supplies



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 reduced demand in respect of nuisance work Q3 experienced in previous years has been replicated 2018/19, thus enabling the team to focus on Food Safety interventions Q3 whilst continuing to deal with those cases meeting the threshold for investigation. Against this background the team worked with a factory in Wychavon district to achieve compliance with a noise abatement notice. A full acoustic enclosure was constructed around the large metal fabrication press and through this co-operation the noise nuisance was abated. Further, a noise abatement notice was served on nightclub in Wyre Forest district following complaints from local residents about loud music.

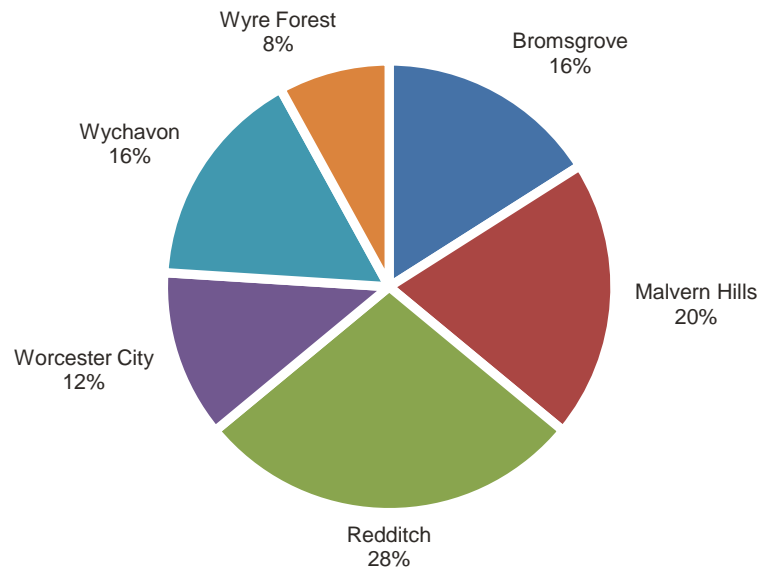


Noise Pollution

The table (right) shows the top 25 wards in Worcestershire with the highest case rate for noise pollution cases. It also shows the relative population and the number of cases recorded. The chart (below) shows the top 25 wards by district. For example, 20% of wards highlighted in the table are located within Worcester City.

Note: Data shown on this page represents the 'year to date' and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.

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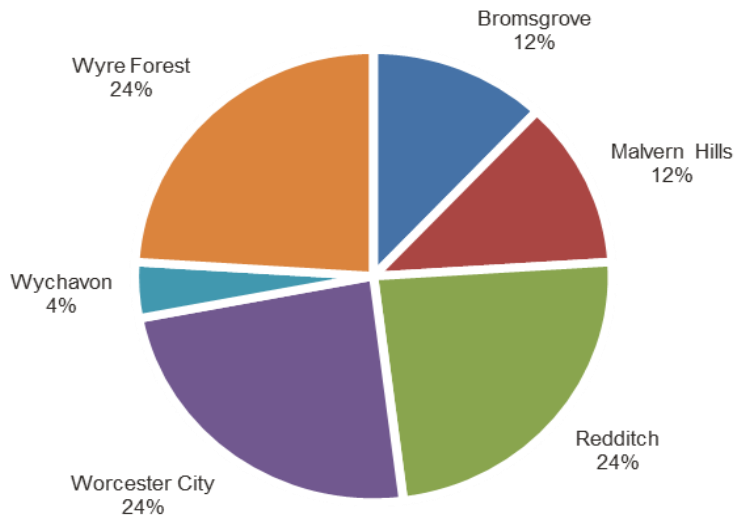
Ward	Total	Population	Rate
Sanders Park	28	3,456	8.10
Norton	15	3,175	4.72
Abbey	28	6,232	4.49
Cathedral	49	11,160	4.39
Wells	14	3,258	4.30
Upton Snodsbury	10	2,692	3.71
Warndon	22	5,928	3.71
Charford	13	3,638	3.57
Lickhill	9	2,535	3.55
Central	23	6,659	3.45
Bowbrook	10	2,907	3.44
Morton	7	2,060	3.40
Longdon	7	2,068	3.38
Headless Cross And Oakenshaw	28	8,539	3.28
Matchborough	20	6,152	3.25
Lodge Park	18	5,630	3.20
Batchley And Brockhill	27	8,628	3.13
Bretforton And Offenham	9	2,883	3.12
Bengeworth	21	7,301	2.88
Greenlands	26	9,298	2.80
Broadwaters	26	9,326	2.79
Hagley East	7	2,586	2.71
Lindridge	6	2,246	2.67
Teme Valley	5	1,920	2.60
Bedwardine	22	8,497	2.59

Noise Pollution (2017/18)

The table (right) shows the top 25 wards in Worcestershire with the highest case rate for noise pollution cases. The data covers 2017/18 and is intended to be a point of reference for the data highlighted on the previous page.

Ward	Total	Population	Rate
Abbey	33	6,197	5.33
Upton And Hanley	21	4,186	5.02
Greenlands	45	9,122	4.93
Rock Hill	14	2,938	4.77
Batchley And Brockhill	40	8,553	4.68
Sanders Park	16	3,463	4.62
Charford	17	3,707	4.59
Astwood Bank And Feckenham	27	6,042	4.47
Blakebrook And Habberley South	39	9,000	4.33
Bedwardine	35	8,279	4.23
Cathedral	45	10,835	4.15
Warndon	23	5,934	3.88
Arboretum	23	6,195	3.71
Bewdley And Rock	31	8,542	3.63
Priory	15	4,234	3.54
Bengeworth	24	6,793	3.53
Central (Redditch)	22	6,494	3.39
Nunnery	27	8,087	3.34
Tardebigge	12	3,611	3.32
Saint Stephen	17	5,233	3.25
Tenbury	12	3,873	3.10
Areley Kings And Riverside	25	8,261	3.03
Aggborough And Spennells	25	8,685	2.88
Mitton	27	9,752	2.77
Winyates	23	8,360	2.75

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Public Health

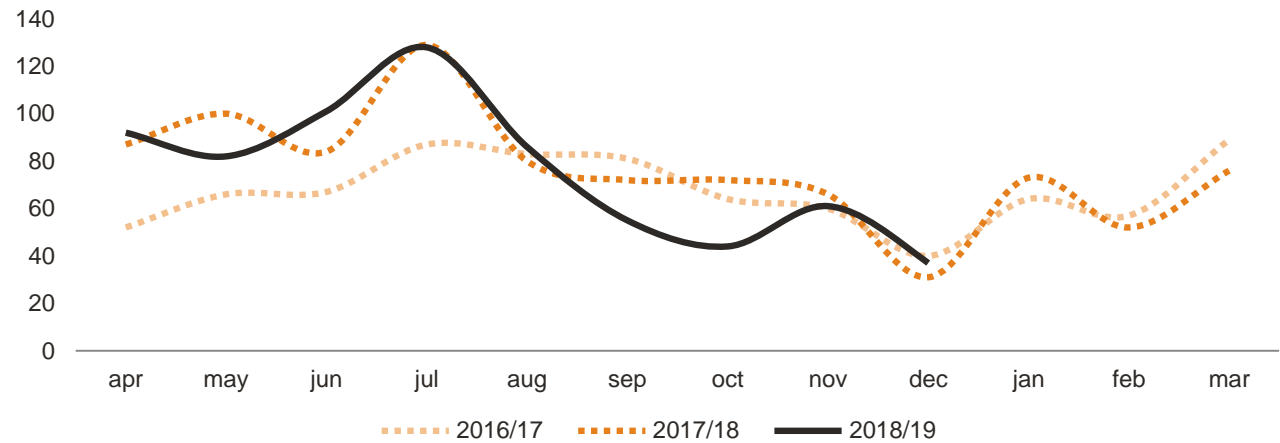
The chart (top right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to public health. Types of cases recorded under this category include accumulations, public burials and pest control. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of subsidised pest control 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.

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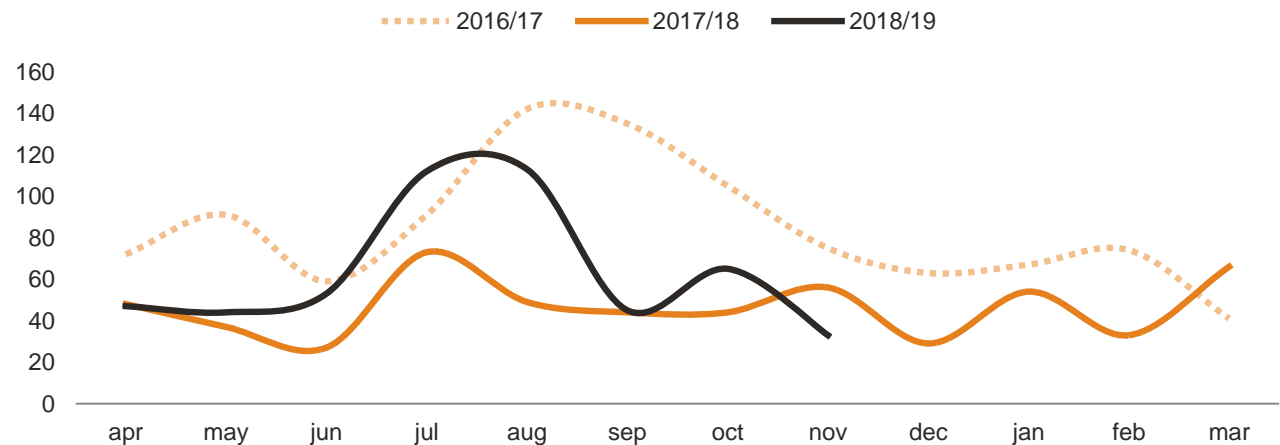
Comments: The numbers of subsidised pest control treatments in relevant Districts have increased during June and July due to the wasp friendly summer weather. This is likely to be repeated with increased rat treatments during the autumn. An increasing number of complaints relating to filthy and verminous premises were received Q2, including one which involved the removal of approximately fifteen tonnes of waste/filthy and verminous articles.

The Community Environmental Health Team undertook countywide sampling of private water supplies used for commercial purposes this quarter following the publication of revised DWI guidance.

complaints and enquiries

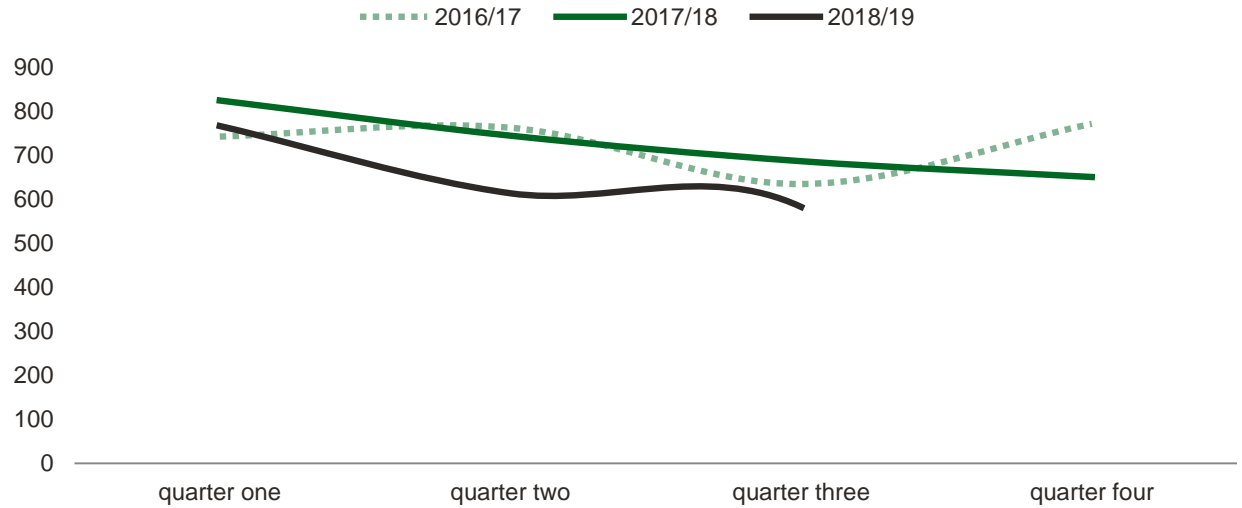


pest control (domestic subsidised treatments)



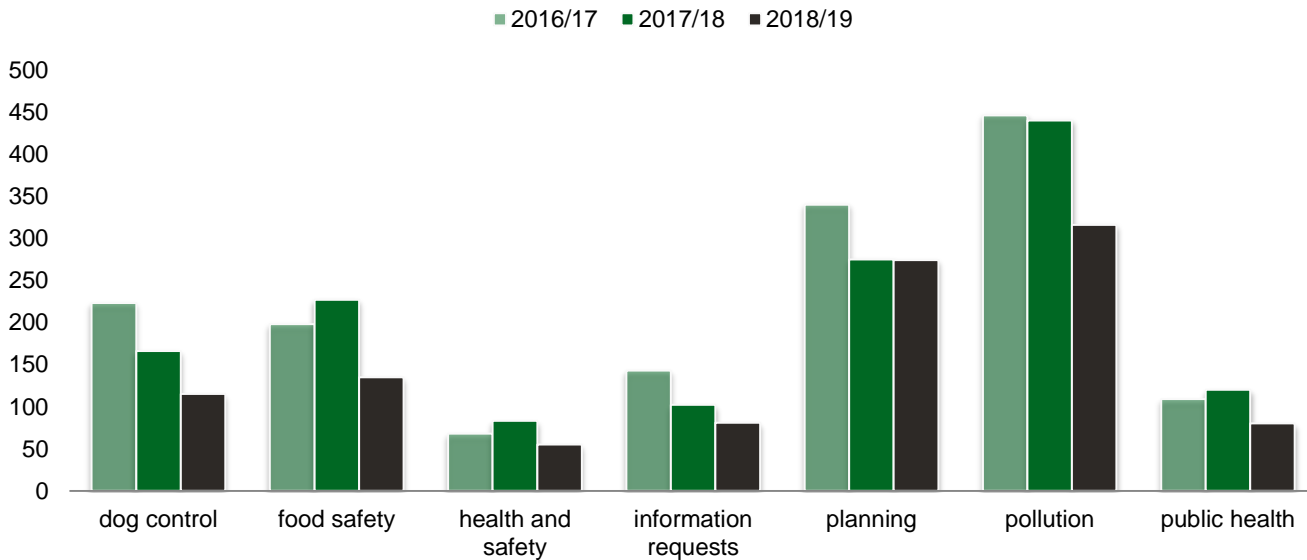
The data on this page relates to *Environmental Health* and *Licensing* complaints, enquiries, applications or notifications where the subject or enquirer was located within the district of *Bromsgrove*.

Note: The charts (below) show the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The total for 2018/19 represents the 'year to date' and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.

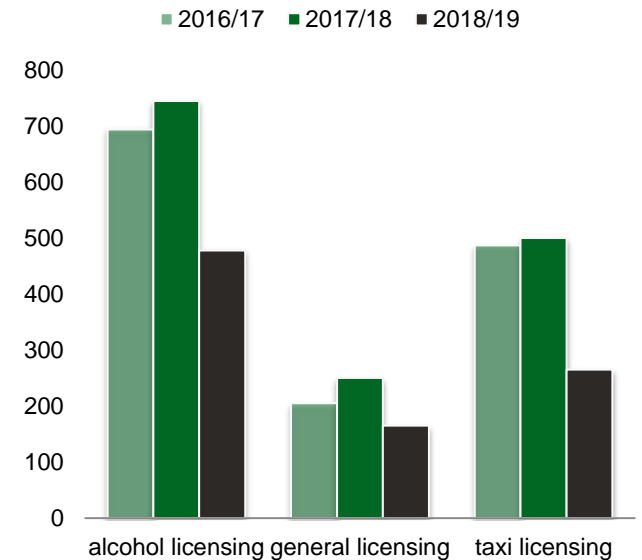


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Environmental Health

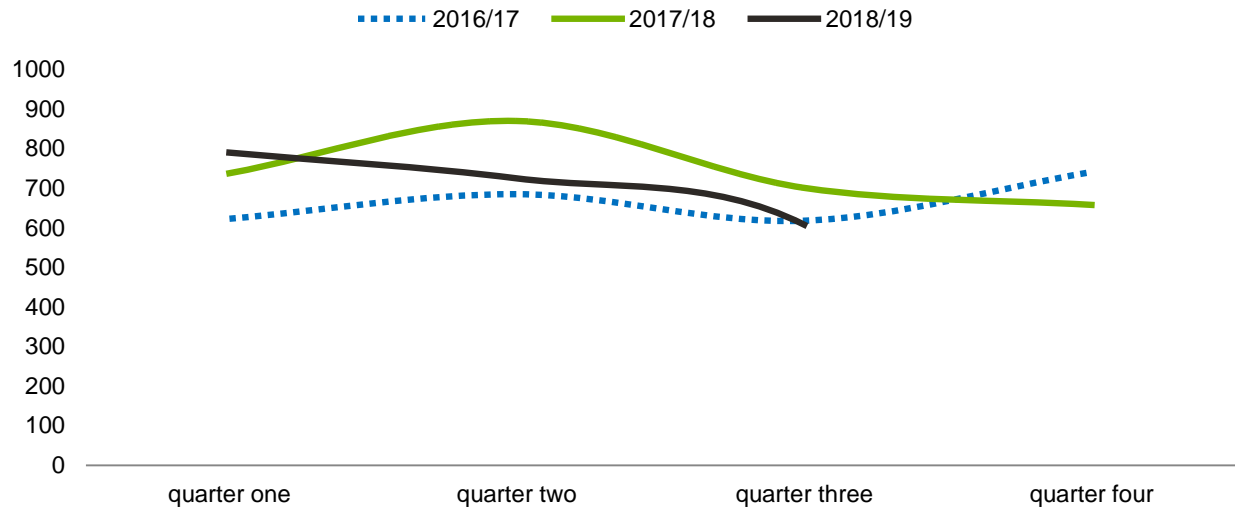


Licensing



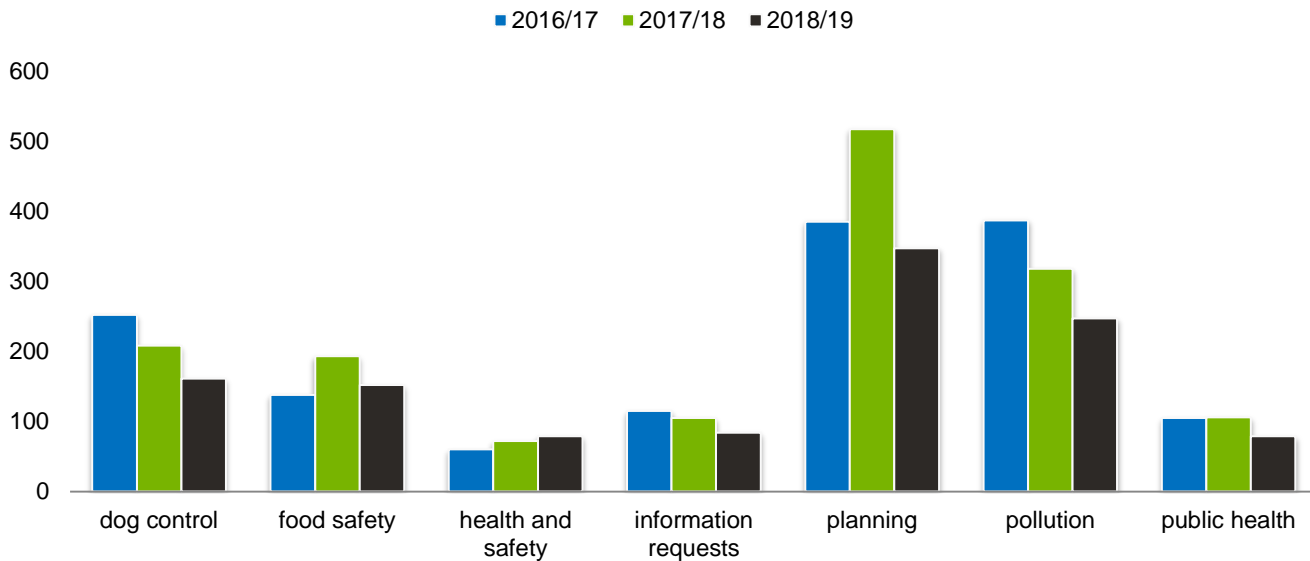
The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing complaints, enquiries, applications or notifications where the subject or enquirer was located within the district of Malvern Hills.

Note: The charts (below) show the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The total for 2018/19 represents the 'year to date' and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.

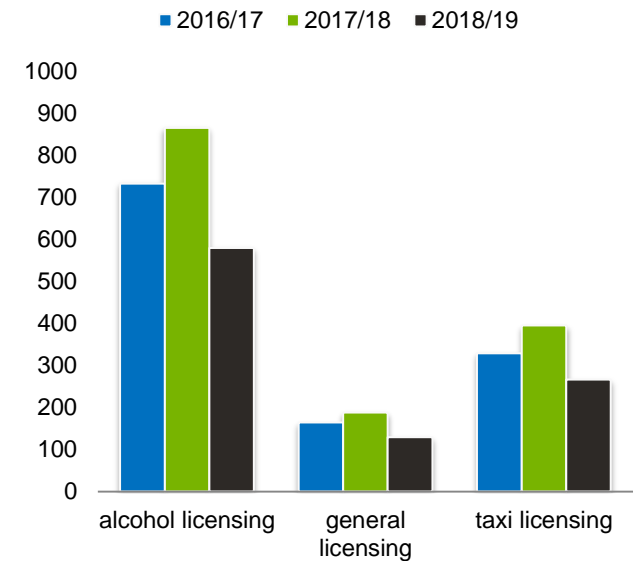


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Environmental Health

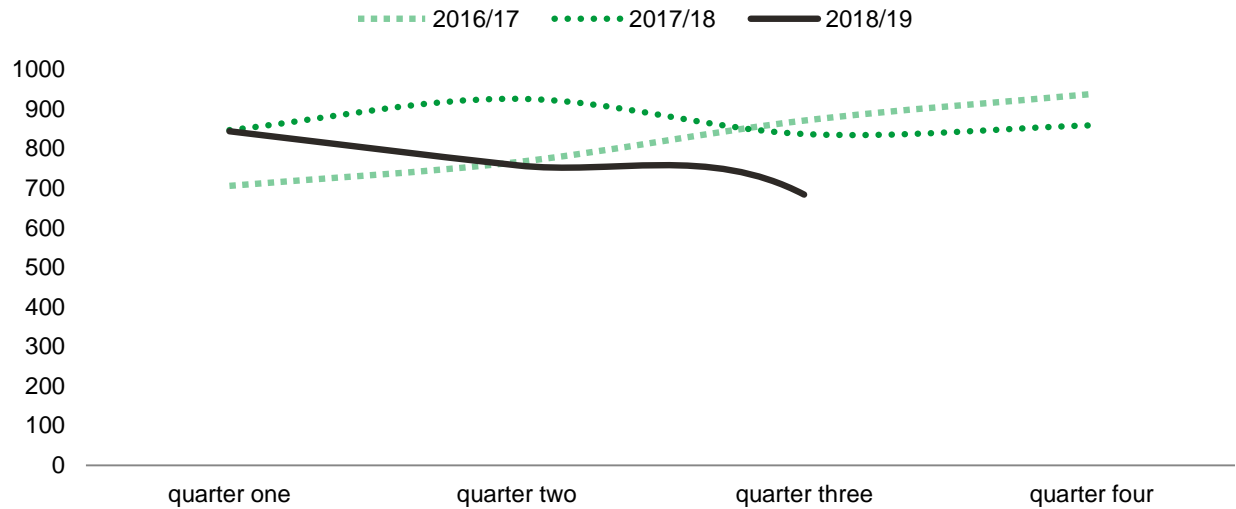


Licensing



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.

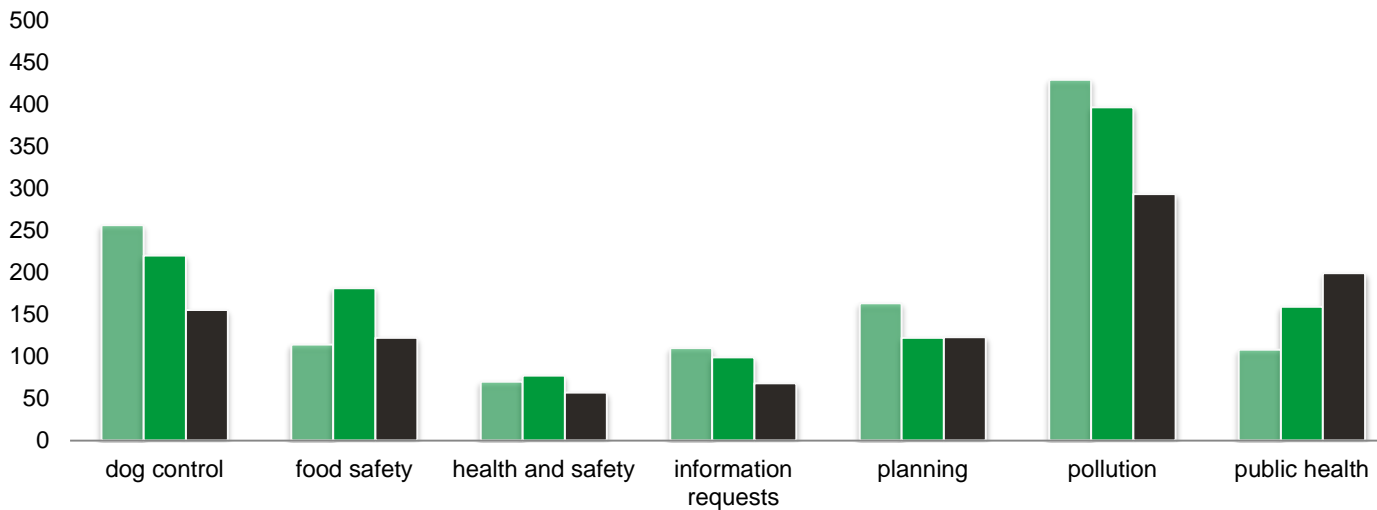
Note: The charts (below) show the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The total for 2018/19 represents the 'year to date' and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.



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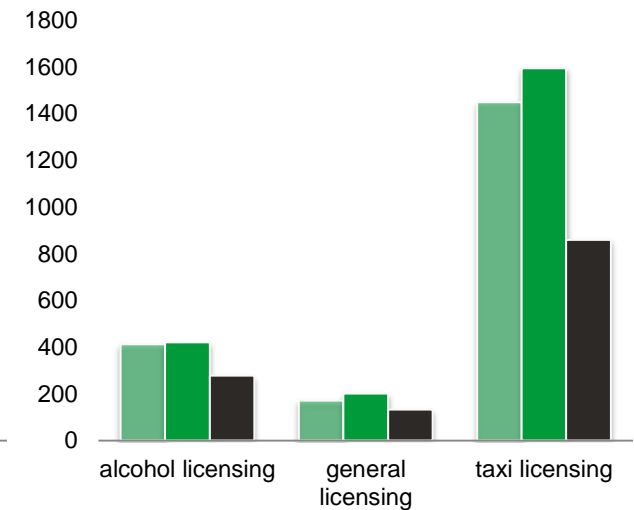
Environmental Health

2016/17 2017/18 2018/19



Licensing

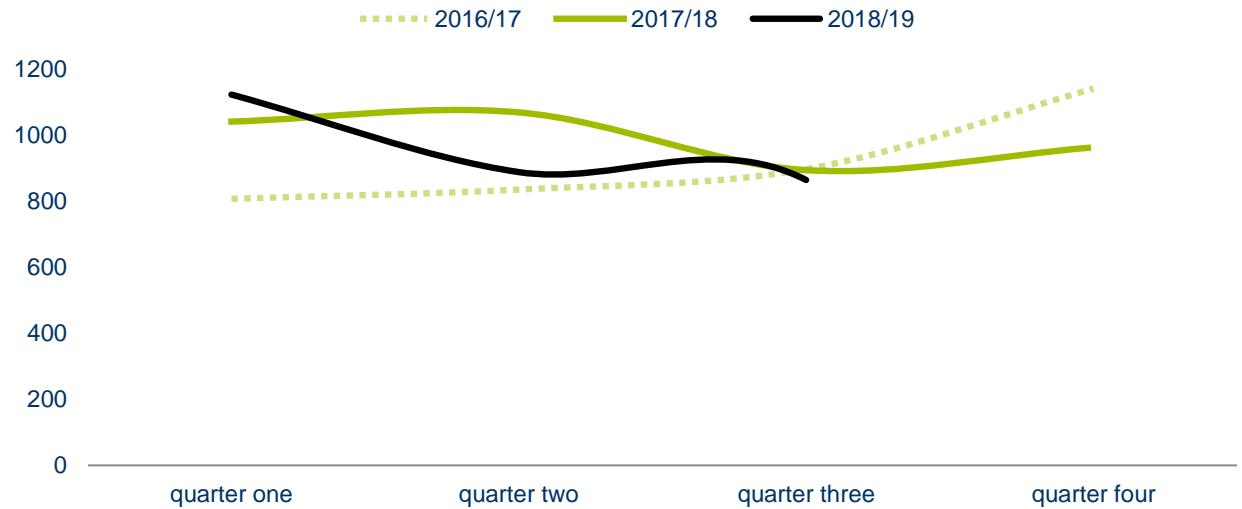
2016/17 2017/18 2018/19





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*.

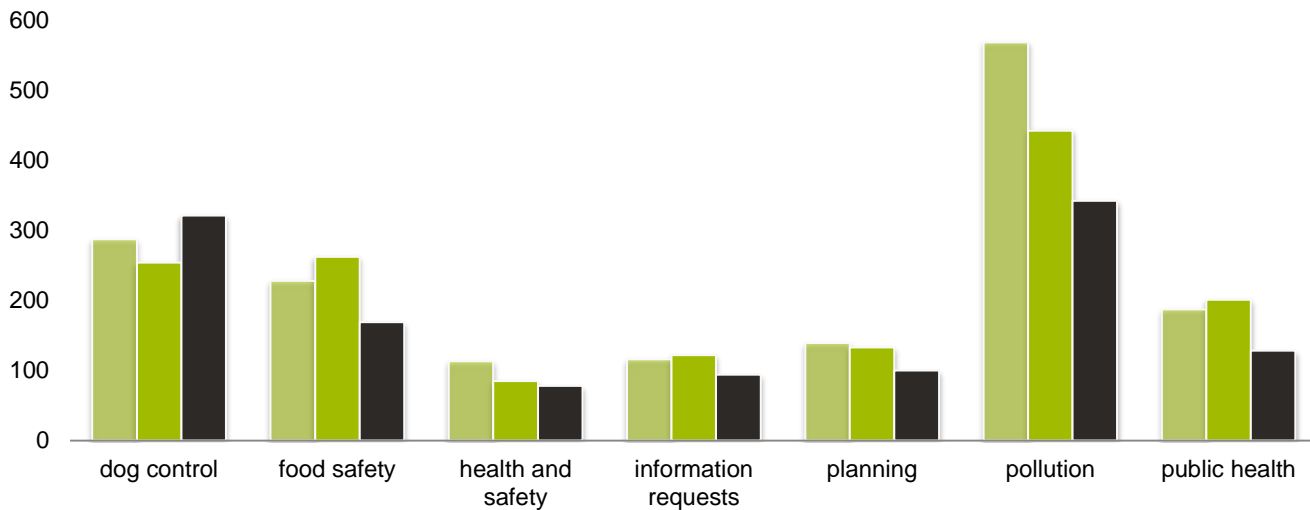
Note: The charts (below) show the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The total for 2018/19 represents the 'year to date' and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.



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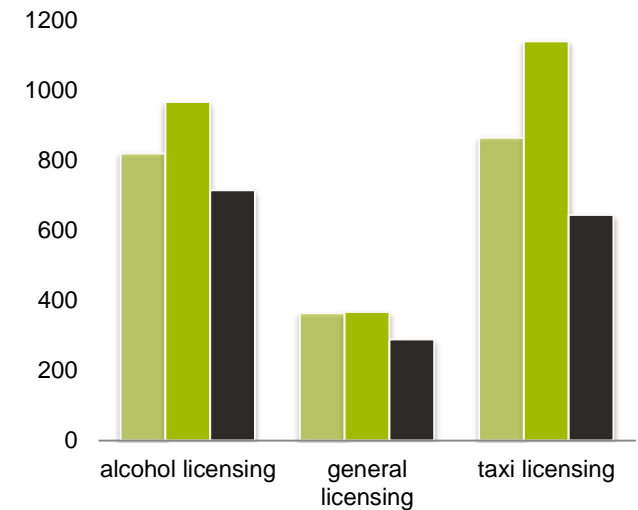
Environmental Health

2016/17 2017/18 2018/19



Licensing

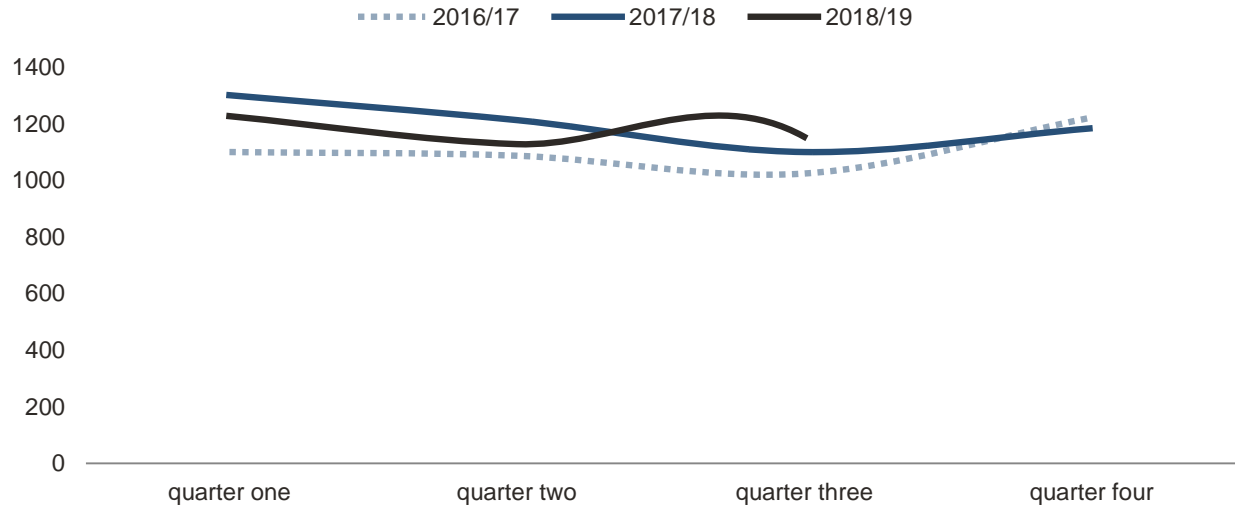
2016/17 2017/18 2018/19



Agenda Item 6

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*.

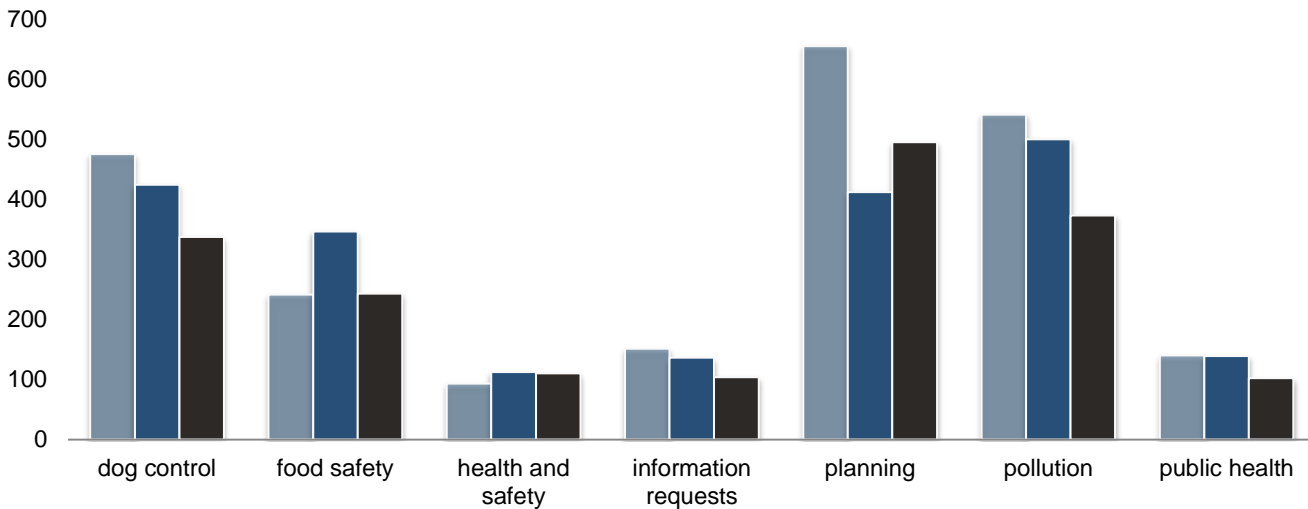
Note: The charts (below) show the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The total for 2018/19 represents the 'year to date' and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.



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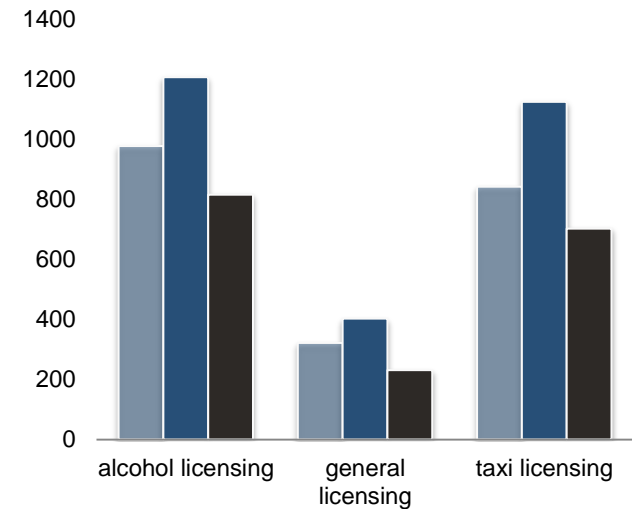
Environmental Health

■ 2016/17 ■ 2017/18 ■ 2018/19



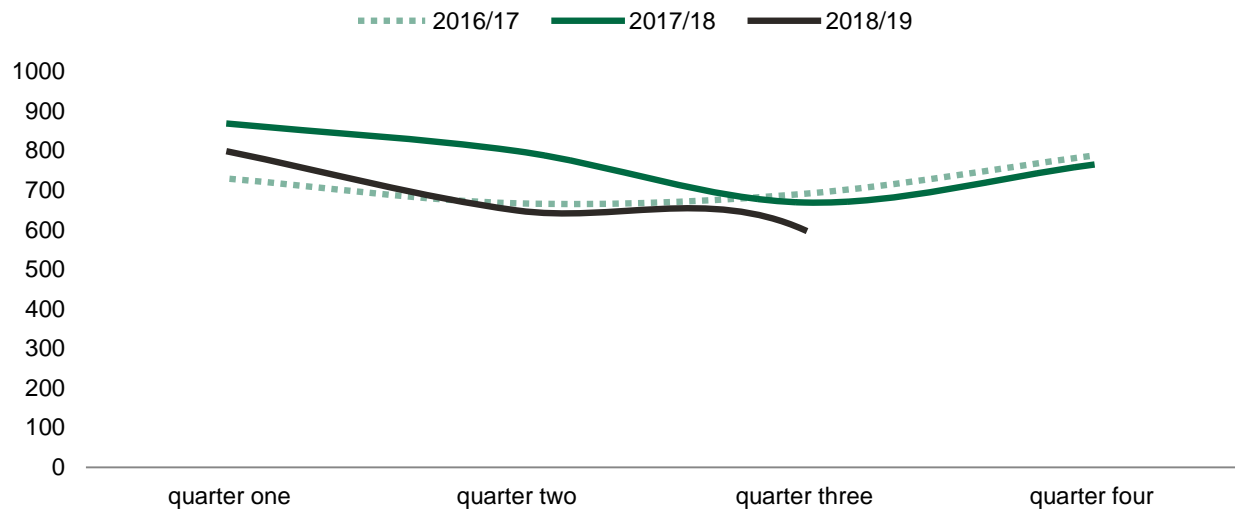
Licensing

■ 2016/17 ■ 2017/18 ■ 2018/19



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*.

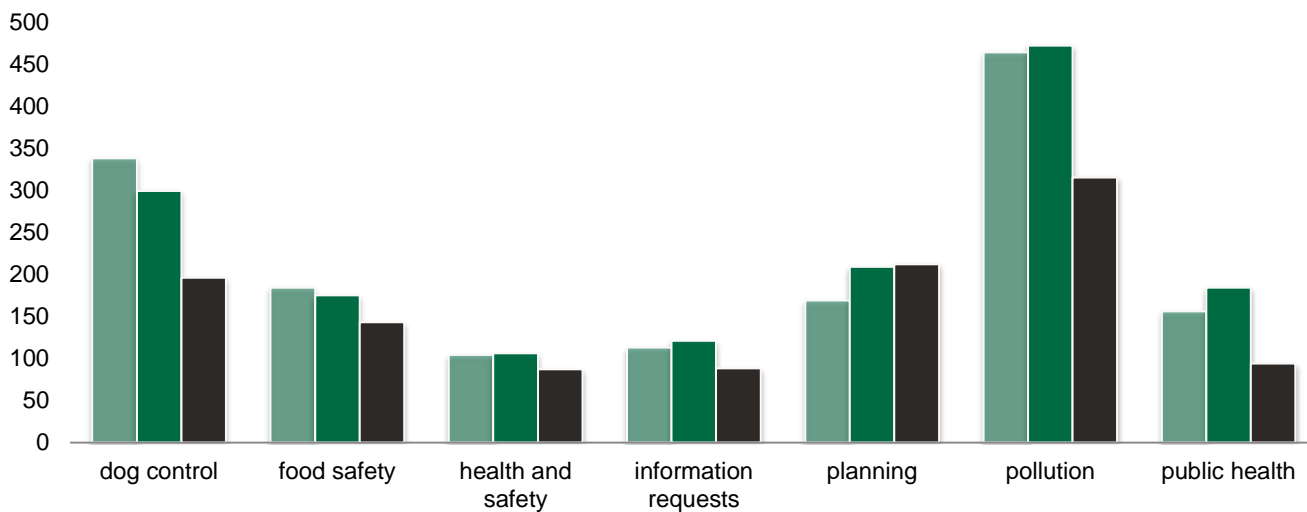
Note: The charts (below) show the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The total for 2018/19 represents the 'year to date' and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.



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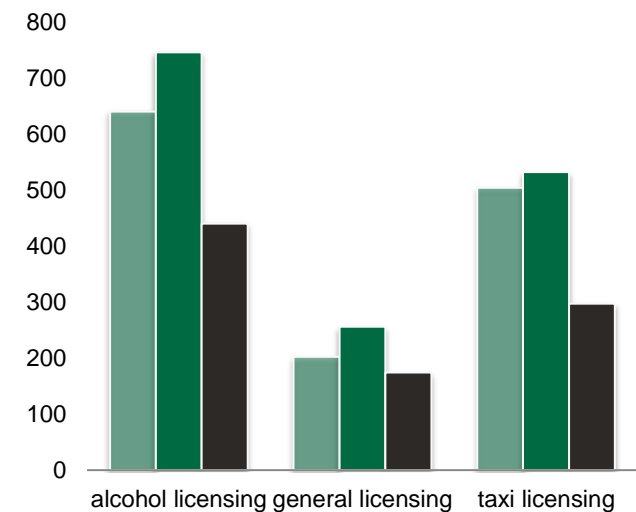
Environmental Health

■ 2016/17 ■ 2017/18 ■ 2018/19



Licensing

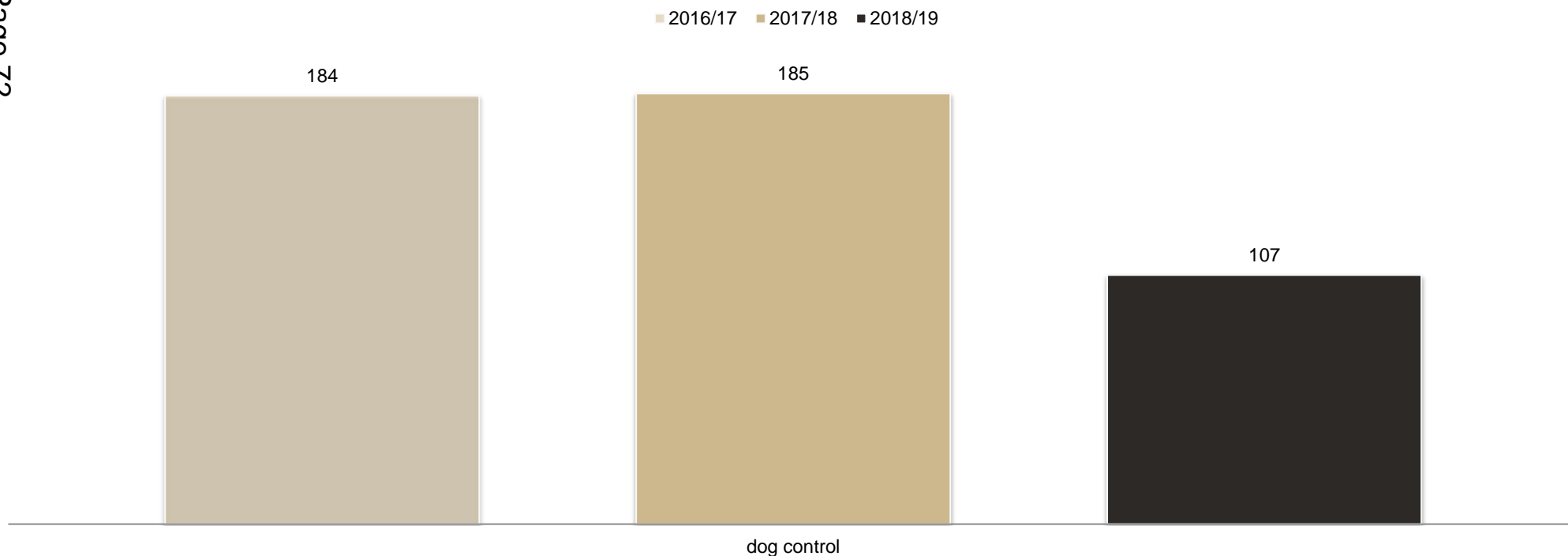
■ 2016/17 ■ 2017/18 ■ 2018/19



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 number of stray dogs remains consistent with previous years, there is a very slight reduction compared with the same quarter last year however this is of little note and is unlikely to have a significant impact on the end of year figures.

The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against the function undertaken by WRS. The total for 2018/19 represents the 'year to date' and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.

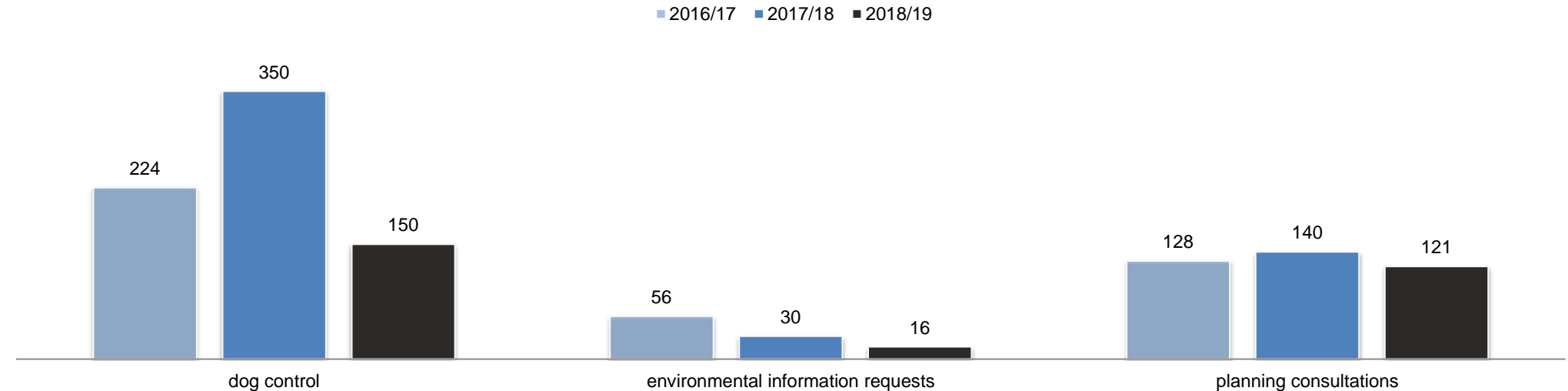


Gloucester City Council

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. There has been a marked reduction in the number of dogs collected in quarter three and this would indicate a continued annual reduction is likely.

The number of Environmental Information Requests received, have continued to be down on last year following Quarter three and overall are not significant in terms of work volume. The planning consultations are up on last year and solely relate to 'contaminated land' matters. In addition to those represented here, we have also been delivering environmental permitting work, inspecting industrial sites and managing the permit application and maintenance processes. All Gloucester inspections have been completed for this financial year.

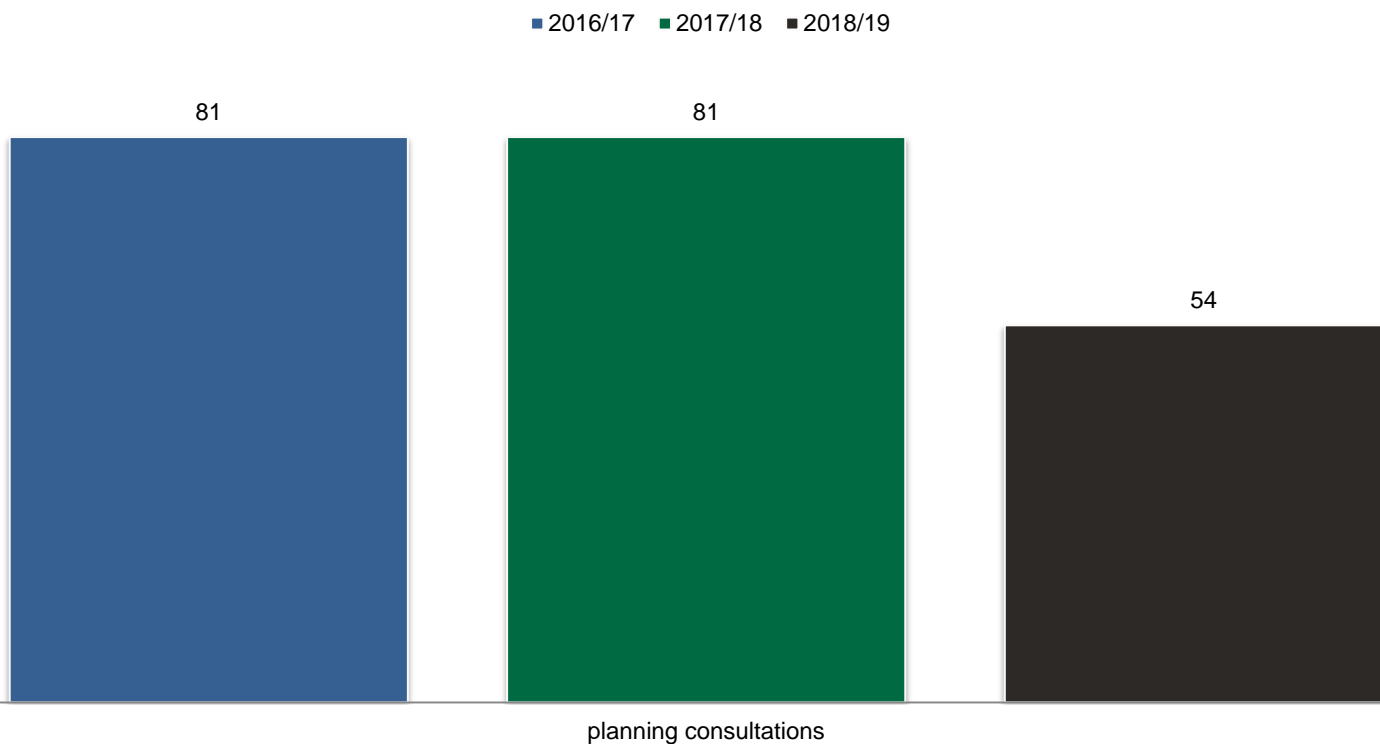
The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the functions undertaken by WRS. The total for 2018/19 represents the 'year to date' and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.



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.

The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against the function undertaken by WRS. The total for 2018/19 represents the 'year to date' and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.



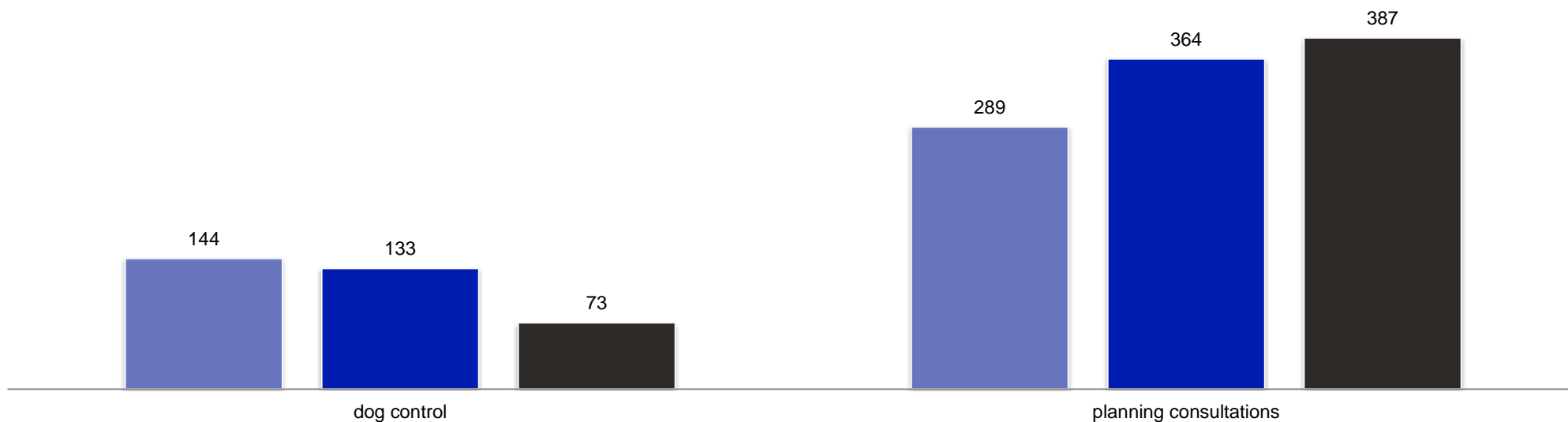
Tewkesbury Borough Council

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.

The number of planning applications that WRS are requested to provide nuisance or air quality advice on continue to be high. Unfortunately, due to a process change, the numbers of consultations for planning requests this year can not be directly compared with previous ones as historically, air quality consultations were under recorded. This has now been rectified which may account for some of the increased level in consultations this year.

The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the functions undertaken by WRS. The total for 2018/19 represents the 'year to date' and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.

■ 2016/17 ■ 2017/18 ■ 2018/19



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WRS Board 14th February 2018

Information Report – Reuniting dogs with Owners Out of Hours

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. Board Members will recall an Information Report presented at the February Board Meeting last year providing a review of WRS Service Complaints. That report included (Review 3) an investigation into 9 complaints received between April 2015 and October 2017 where the main cause for complaint was dissatisfaction of a dog owner that they were not able to collect their dog at the weekend or Bank Holidays.</p> <p>The report presented possible solutions with associated costs and barriers to be overcome to resolve those complaints. The Board agreed the cost of implementing a solution was not justifiable to prevent 9 complaints over two and half years.</p> <p>The section of the report relevant to this issue is presented as Appendix 1 for reference purposes.</p>
Report	<p>Since that report WRS Officers have been working with the main contracted kennelling provider to attempt to overcome the barriers preventing out of hours reunification of stray dogs with their owners.</p> <p>Following negotiation the kennelling contractor agreed to a trial of facilitating reunification of some dogs to owners out of hours within certain parameters (conditions) which have enabled some of the barriers reported previously to be overcome. The trial was successful for the three months it ran with no significant issues.</p> <p>The conditions enable dogs to be returned to their owner where the situation concerning that dog is straightforward: that is, the dog is microchipped and the details correctly match up to the person claiming the dog.</p> <p>The conditions that apply:</p>

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- Collection is only possible out of hours up to 6pm (Monday to Friday) and between the hours of 9am – 11:30am and 3pm – 4pm (Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays) excluding Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.
- Owner is able to and pay in cash;
- Details on the microchip are up to date and match those of the owner claiming the dog;

It is NOT possible for an owner to collect their dog out of hours if the following apply:

- The dog is not microchipped or the details held on a microchip are not up to date or the chip is unregistered;
- The microchip is registered to a foreign company that will not release the details;
- There is a dispute concerning costs or any fees applicable;
- Where the owner is not able to pay in cash;
- There is a specific concern regarding the identification of the owner;
- The dog owner or acquaintances have been abusive, threatening or represent a risk to Kennel staff;
- There is a health, welfare or legal issue with the dog;

Any Owner not able to collect their dog out of hours due to the reasons above will be directed to the WRS Duty Officers at 9am the next working day as previously.

The above process enables swift reunification where owners have been responsible with keeping details up to date with a microchipped dog but reduces risk to staff at the kennels, avoids scenarios where there are complexities in fee calculation or welfare investigations. Whilst complaints are still likely where the owner has not been able to claim their dog out of hours, there are defensible reasons for this.

The new process will be kept under review.

Mark Cox, Technical Services Manager
01562 738023
mark.cox@worcsregservices.gov.uk

Contact Points

Appendix 1

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 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.

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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

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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.

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