

JOINT COMMITTEE

21st November 2013

Activity Data Q1 and 2 2013/14

Recommendation

That members note the report

Contribution to Priorities

The report covers both district and county functionality so covers the wide range of local authority corporate priorities to which regulatory services contribute

Introduction & Report

Joint Committee members have asked the service to provide data on activity levels to help reassure local members that WRS activity continues to tackle issues broadly across the county.

The attached report follows the format of previous reports. Members may remember that, due to data transfer issues, we are unable to report fully on quarter 1. We agreed to present 4 months worth of data to you, but, on further reflection, it seemed more sensible to give you a cumulative indication of activity for the first half of 2013/14.

The information shows that Trading Standards complaints from the Citizens Advice Consumer Service (CACS) appear down so far this year compared with our historical figures from Consumer Direct. This could reflect the lower levels of marketing that have been done in relation to the service and their contact number. We will continue to monitor this and look at other marketing opportunities to increase awareness of how to contact CACS. We are likely to see an increase in volumes around Christmas but this will have to be significant to get the service to the same volumes as previous years.

The data shows the summer spike in nuisance complaints quite clearly. In the last report we showed that the 751

complaints for April and May were the same in terms on numbers as those received between October and December of 2012. Had the April/ May complaint rate continued, we would have received 1500 complaints between 1st June and the 30th September. Instead we received 1800. We have mapped the noise complaints to show where the main nuisance issues are coming up in the districts as around 50% of nuisance complaints relate to noise nuisance. We know from past experience that a good summer yields additional work. We can use this 20% increase as a benchmark from which to measure future years.

Each district section shows the number of food inspections completed so far this financial year. The service focuses its food hygiene resource on catering premises and food manufacturers. Small retail-only outlets are inspected in response to intelligence or complaints. The number of premises due an inspection varies slightly from year to year but we need to deliver around 1300 inspections to meet our requirements. To date we have undertaken 887. Officers have also been taking samples to test the effectiveness of cleaning at premises and hygiene during preparation. 350 of these have been submitted for bacteriological examination. These are a useful practical test of apparent good practice. No significant adverse findings have yet been demonstrated. Officers are also taking swabs of apparently cleaned work surfaces to test the effectiveness of cleaning practice.

We have also, for the first time, been able to provide a count of the number of licensing service requests from a single database, with 1732 in the first half of the year. Reports to Licensing committees will give members more detail on the breakdown of these.

The Health and Safety function is mainly delivered by proactive project work now, rather than routine inspection. Current guidance from the HSE (National Local Authority Enforcement Code) is to restrict proactive inspections to specified sectors and types of organisation set out in the guidance. These are being addressed by the health and safety projects. There are very few premises in the whole county that are genuinely high risk in relation to the local authority health and safety at work function (it should be remembered that the Health and Safety Executive deal with the most dangerous sectors like agriculture and the building trade.) Areas being looked at are warehousing, builders merchants and leisure activity premises (those with zip wires, rope swings and similar,) and officers are looking at swimming pools for hygiene and health protection control. We highlight this project activity via the members newsletter rather than reporting through this method, as we do with our formal



actions and prosecution activity.

It should also be noted that staff we working hard on a number of significant cases which came to fruition just after the end of September, including prosecutions in both the Magistrates and Crown Court. Several appeals against the service of notice have also been defended. These will be included in the report on activity which will come to Joint Committee after Christmas.

Financial Implications

None

Sustainability

None

Contact Points

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Background Papers

Activity Data Report
