

## **Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee**

**20<sup>th</sup> February 2014**

**Activity Data Q2 and 3 2013/14**

### **Recommendation**

**That Joint Committee notes 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 new format first introduced to members at their Away Day on 20<sup>th</sup> January but contains 2 quarters of data so members can compare the relevant quarter with the previous 3 months. Because of the way we have structured the report to take data from the system, members also have a glimpse of quarter 4 information so far, but our focus is going to be on Q3.

The information shows that Trading Standards complaints from the Citizens Advice Consumer Service (CACS) have remained down so far this year compared with our historical figures from Consumer Direct. We have asked our officers to raise this with colleagues within the region to see if this is a common trend, suggesting a failing in the promotion of the CACS number. The highest areas of demand remain home improvements, second hand cars and furniture supply. Members will see that a significant proportion of complaints are not linked to a district in Worcestershire. This is partly a data issue, which we are looking at, but also a significant proportion of complaints arise from people not resident in Worcestershire or they relate to goods/ services purchased out of county by Worcestershire residents. This reflects the

nature of modern economic transactions with people being less focused on purchases being made locally.

The nuisance data shows the summer spike in complaints quite clearly, with a total of 1475 complaints being recorded between July and September. Complaints peaked at 650 per month in July and August then fell over the Autumn to 208 in December. The total for Quarter 3 at 714 was similar but slightly lower than the 750 received in Quarter 3 of 2012. Service requests for planning, mainly requests from the partner planning teams, ran at around 90 per month during the summer, peaking at 115 for Octobers, then dropping off towards Christmas with only 57 in December.

The data also shows that noise increases as a proportion of nuisance complaints during the summer. Noise complaints made up 53% of nuisance issues during Quarter 3 but the summer months in Quarter 2 in represented 64.5% of nuisance complaints.

Previous reports have included maps showing the location of noise issues in each district. Following some discussion at the Joint Committee Away Day, rather than continuing with this, we have presented members with a table of wards with the highest levels of complaint. We felt that this may enable Joint Committee members to engage more with other members in their authorities on particular problems. During the six months period all 6 districts have wards featuring in the top 10. The data also contains an overall breakdown by district for all nuisance complaints in each quarter, presented in a way that members can see across the 6 districts where the demand is arising.

Last time we reported progress on our food inspection programme. Some 1300 premises were included in the programme and, by the end of December, 1074 had been inspected, so we are on target to complete all of these by the end of March. Details by district will be provided as part of the Annual Report. All of this data is used to support the Food Standards Agency's Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (formerly referred to as Scores on the Doors,) which rates the level of hygiene at our local catering establishments and contributes to the performance indicators agreed for the service.

The data continues to highlight the large volumes of demand coming into the service for Licensing. We have identified some issues with the data transfer, which will need to be rectified before the service can report more fully on licensing activity from Uniform. A full update on Licensing will be provided to Joint Committee with the next set of activity data.

The final data pages contain improved end to end time



reporting, with a breakdown by various categories of complaint, each one identifying:

- Average days to allocate a case
- Average days to close from allocation
- End to End time

Certain areas of noise nuisance are similarly broken down due to the very varied nature of this category. Staff in the Intelligence team who extract this data have noted that we need to ensure we continue to encourage staff to record data accurately to make these figures as meaningful as possible.

It was noted at the end of the last report that a significant volume of casework went through legal process during Quarter 3 and we had promised to make members aware of these. They included the following:

1. Two Redditch households causing misery to their neighbours by playing loud music had audio equipment seized after they failed to comply with the terms of a noise abatement notice. Prosecutions may follow.
2. Redditch Magistrates imposed the maximum fine available to them of £5000 on the Liverpool-based company TJ Morris, which trades as Home Bargains Store nationally. In addition they were ordered to pay £1685 costs with a victim surcharge of £120 for selling unsafe pens as part of a stationery offer.
3. Magistrates imposed a 28-day order curfew on a 44-year-old man after counterfeit goods including Jacks Wills T-shirts and Oakley sunglasses, were recovered from an Evesham shop. A total of 631 items of clothing and accessories all of which were believed to be counterfeit. Among the haul were Barbour jackets, Nike trainers and Pandora bracelets. A further order was made for a contribution to the prosecution costs of £750 and a victim surcharge of £60 and a Forfeiture Order was made for all of the 631 items recovered.
4. At Worcester Crown Court Michael Grice of Molesworth Drive, Bristol was given an immediate 12 months prison sentence. Carol Grice, aged 57 of Strode Road, Clevedon, was given nine months imprisonment suspended for 18 months. Mr Grice, aged 67, was disqualified from being a director/co-director of a company for 5 years and Mrs Grice for 3 years. At the trial it was heard that the pair had initially set up a business called Transnational

Services GB Limited and then a second company HealthCare Training Academy. The companies purported to offer qualifications and work placements to overseas students primarily from the Philippines. They were each convicted of three offences of fraudulent trading as the jury found that they had defrauded students and their sponsors by accepting payment for the courses which they could not fulfil. Over the four years period that the companies, were in business, the final of which saw it based in Church Street, Kidderminster, more than £700,000 had been received from students or their sponsor who had hoped to gain vocational qualifications and training.

Full details of these and other cases can be found on the WRS website at:

<http://www.worcsregservices.gov.uk/latest-news-press-releases.aspx>

**Financial Implications**

None

**Sustainability**

None

**Contact Points**

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**Background Papers**

Activity Data Report

