

## Joint Committee

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> June 2014

Activity Data Q3 and 4 2013/14

### Recommendation

That:

1. Joint Committee notes the report,
2. Members of the Committee comment on the nature of the content and its presentation, to enable officers to provide the right information to them in an acceptable format
3. Members of the Committee consider the appropriateness of using this type of activity data to publicise the activities of WRS

### 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 the previous one and shows members three full quarters of data for comparison. Officers would ask members, whilst they are reviewing the content of the data, to consider the nature of the content and the way it is presented. Officers are keen to put the right data before members in a way that supports both their understanding of and their confidence in the service's activities.

In the last report it was noted that complaints from Citizens Advice Consumer Service are down. This appears to be a national issue, with authorities in many regions reporting this. It has been raised with CACS through the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers representative on the CACS Boar which engages with partners. The situation will be monitored. Locally we may need to ensure that the

number is as well broadcast as possible.

The highest areas of demand from local consumers relates to remain home improvements, second hand cars and furniture supply. These are usually the top three areas. 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 lower level of service requests that one would expect for the winter months. Domestic nuisance issues return to their pre-summer levels. Members will be able to see from the data how big an increase in nuisance workload the summer brings by comparing figures across the three quarters.

The ward data relating to nuisance shows wards from most of Worcestershire featuring in the top 10, however, reviewing the data for the 9 months highlights Redditch as a particular area for nuisance issues. The Geographic Environmental Health Manager and his team will be considering if there are any proactive measures that could be taken to tackle this.

Since the last report we have identified a slight error in the way officers have been recording their work for the district planning partners which means we have under-reported on this activity. This should be corrected for the 2014/15 reports.

We completed the programme of food hygiene inspection for the year, exceeding our target of 1310. Details by district are provided in the Annual Report which is on the same agenda as this 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, although there was a reduction in quarter 4. This is likely to be a post Christmas effect, with fewer temporary events taking place.

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
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- 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.

A number of cases were also concluded in quarter 4, some highlights are below:

1. A Batchley woman has been fined £3,087.46 for causing a noise nuisance to her neighbours. On 17 January Vicky Hawthorne of Evesham Road, was convicted at Redditch Magistrates Court for failing to comply with a noise abatement notice.

The case was brought by Worcestershire Regulatory Services, on behalf of Redditch Borough Council, when Ms Hawthorne failed to comply with the noise abatement notice. Officers seized her CD player, speakers, media players and CDs. The 33-year-old failed to attend court and the case was heard in her absence

2. A Worcester woman was sentenced to 200 hours of unpaid work after she was found selling counterfeit goods over the internet. On 30 January at Worcester Magistrates Court Sharon Proctor pleaded guilty to five counts of breaching the Trade marks Act 1994.

This followed a raid on her home by Worcestershire Regulatory Services Trading Standards Officers which was being used to manufacture the goods. The court heard how Miss Proctor was making and selling hooded tops with the JLS logo and T-shirts with the Children In Need logo Pudsey Bear. eBay records show over a short period of around 18 months the 40-year-old has sold 9,592 items with a value of £64,730. Miss Proctor was also ordered to pay £3000 costs and a victim surcharge £60. When considering sentence the Magistrates said that she was only just below the custody threshold.

3. A Kidderminster woman was fined for selling pre-packed meats which weighed less than the label stated. JMF Meats Director, Joanne Foran of Oxbow Way, appeared at Kidderminster Magistrates Court on 19 March following an investigation by Worcestershire Regulatory Services Trading Standards officers. The 43-year-old pleaded guilty to

charges under the Weights and Measures Act 1985 and the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 and Ms Foran and the company were each fined £330 and ordered to pay costs of £696 and a victim surcharge of £15. The company which traded as Clover Meats in Oxford Street Kidderminster, and has since ceased trading although Ms Foran as the company director at the time of the offences will be liable to pay all of the fines and costs imposed by the court.

As a result of a consumer complaint the shop was visited by a Trading Standards Officer in November 2013. Checks were carried out on a selection of pre packed meats displayed for sale, which revealed weights of meat significantly less than their labelled weight. It was found that metal trays and packaging had been included in the weighting process and this increased the overall weight, and therefore price, of the packs. The steel tray and packaging was then removed when the product was purchased. These trays and packaging weighed anything up to 1 kg and caused short weights of between 27% and 36%, which averaged out at £3.11 per pack sold.

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>

Members are also asked to consider whether the data in this report would be suitable for use for publicity purposes again to inform the public of the service's activity.

**Financial Implications**

None

**Sustainability**

None

**Contact Points**

Simon Wilkes  
Business Manager  
01527-548314

**Background Papers**

Activity Data Report

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