

JOINT COMMITTEE

19th February 2015

Activity & Performance Data Quarters 1, 2 and 3 2014/15

Recommendation

1. That members note the report

2. That members use relevant forums within their authorities to share this information with all elected members

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 continues to tackle issues broadly across the county.

Activity Data

The activity report attached as Appendix B comes in the new extended format put forward last quarter, providing members with wide ranging information across a number of parameters. It will build into the full end of year activity report. It contains all of the cross-county comparators that members will be used to and also a new section for each district covering each one's particular activities in more detail.

Each of the Team Managers has again provided a commentary on their areas of work to give members a flavour for what is happening and explaining some of the wider activity.

For the Technical Pollution team, in Air Quality the focus has been on the forming of a Steering Group to take forward the County-wide strategy, on revoking one AQMA whilst preparing to declare several others and, in Contaminated Land, the focus has been on the resolution of a long-standing soil contamination issue in Redditch, plus assisting Bromsgrove Planning with complex landfill fill gas issues. In their work on Environmental Permitting, the team have visited the premises scheduled for inspection and assessed their processes

against their permits based on risk. Data has been passed to partner finance teams so that invoices can be raised for the annual charges for these permits. The team has also been working with a number of businesses to either change or develop their permit applications, and also to improve compliance. One business in particular is of interest as its process provides an innovative method of disposing of worn motor-vehicle tyres. This is at the cutting edge of technology and needs careful handling by the team to support the business but protect the public from the potential impacts of the tyre pyrolysis process.

For the Community Environmental Health team, the number of food interventions has increased as we move into the quieter period for nuisance issues. As we said last time, food competent officers were diverted onto nuisance work to cover off the summer spike (now clearly visible in the tables,) and now these officers are picking up the pace on food visits. The team is on target to meet its target number of visits for the year. The last quarter was quieter for nuisance than the same quarter in 2013/14 and, for reasons unknown, there were more industrial related noise issues than in that quarter and more complaints about accumulations. Pests also seemed to feature more in the complaint data, possibly because of last year's mild winter and the reasonable summer. Staff had to deal with fewer accidents in this quarter than the same quarter in 2013/14 but the number of infectious disease notifications appears to be higher.

For the Trading Standards and Animal Health team there was a fall in the number of consumer complaints referred onto the service by the Citizens Advice Consumer Service compared with the same period last year, but overall demand for the year is similar to the previous one. The team is now focusing its resources only on the most serious of complaints, with everything else being reviewed as part of a tasking process where persistent issues and problem traders are allocated to officers to tackle. The team have also had a number of great successes in Court, which are highlighted at the end of this report.

For Licensing, this is the first report where we have been able to give you a breakdown of the areas of activity being covered by our staff. As you will see from the tables, the two largest areas by far relate to taxis and to the Licensing Act 2003 (alcohol and entertainment.) This applies to both applications (new, renewals and the numerous variations that can be requested,) and for service requests. Going forward this will help us to paint a clearer picture of what work needs to be done and help us to match the skills and knowledge required against the demand faced.

Performance Indicators

The table at Appendix A outlines the performance information so far. These are County-wide figures. A number of these will be provided on a district by district basis at the end of the year. We have updated those which are provided quarterly. Where we have been able to update others outside of the agreed timeframe, these are indicated in



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Customer satisfaction for members of the public increased slightly to just over 77% for the year to date. This compares favourably with last year's figure. The proportion of people who feel better equipped to deal with their issues in the future has improved from last quarter and is now at 74% for the year, slightly ahead of the last annual figure (73%.)

Compliments continue to outstrip corporate complaints by 2 to 1. Employee sickness rates remain low compared with the national averages.

Cases coming to fruition in the second quarter included:

Fine for mislabelled 'cheese'

A company has been fined for falsely describing a mislabelled mix of vegetable fat, water and cheese as „pizza cheese“. Welsh company, GRH Food Company Ltd of Pwllheli pleaded guilty to breaching the Food Safety Act and the Food Labelling Regulations, by selling food not of the substance demanded or specified on the label and for failing to provide a full list of ingredients, at Kidderminster Magistrates Court on Friday 19th December 2014.

The court heard that the prosecution was brought by Worcestershire Regulatory Services after trading standards officers discovered the product, called Pappa Gino's Pizza Cheese, at a Kidderminster retailer. Laboratory analysis showed it contained water and vegetable oil that were not declared on the label, in addition to milk fat.

The law requires products labelled as „cheese“ to contain exclusively dairy ingredients. „Cheese analogues“ made with vegetable oil and other additives are not illegal, but must be properly identified.

Magistrates fined the company £4,750 plus a £120 victim surcharge and £1,300 costs.”

Preventive work was also undertaken including:

Patrol to deter rogue traders

This week, rogue traders providing gardening and tree cutting services across Redditch were pursued by Worcestershire Regulatory Services and West Mercia Police. Trading Standards Officers from WRS and Police Officers carried out a roving rogue trader patrol around the borough on Tuesday 11th November. The patrol, to engage with and check out traders in the area, came as a result of receiving a number of reports of illegal activity involving gardening and tree cutting services.

A number of traders were stopped and issued advice in relation to the legal obligations they have to their customers. They were reminded that, since July 2014, the law now states that traders must provide a 14 day cooling off period for all contracts agreed in a

customer's home.

As well as publicising cases, with Christmas coming at the end of the quarter, the service pushed messages about canine welfare very strongly in the press during the run up to the festive period. One is reproduced below in full:

Think Twice Again To Stamp Out Animal Cruelty

One of Worcestershire's dog wardens has revealed more cases of cruelty towards dogs which she says "would break the hearts of even the hardest of men." Pip Singleton who works for Worcestershire Regulatory Services, is hot on the heels of a campaign which she launched earlier this month highlighting the plight of the dogs which had been dumped and rescued by officers. A social media and press campaign ensued and Pip has been inundated with calls from the public who were distressed by the increase of cases of cruelty towards dogs. To keep up momentum Pip has revealed the latest cases which she has come across in a bid to urge residents to speak out against cruel dog owners and to encourage people to think twice before purchasing a pet.

Pip said: "I am delighted with the support the first tranche of photographs and case studies generated – but unfortunately this isn't even the tip of the ice-berg. These are just four cases of the many which we have dealt with over the last three weeks.

"I have been in this job for nearly 20 years and my heart still gets broken.

"In fact Charlie, who was found in a mop-bucket of broken concrete with a deformed leg, the fur he had left was matted and dreadlocked and he was malnourished, would break the hearts of even the hardest men. He was left with a note saying "My name is Charlie, Please love me."

"Luckily a passer-by found him and rushed him to our vets – but despite me nursing him for two week, he had to be put down in the end.

"I cannot comprehend why people feel the need to do these awful things to such lovely innocent creatures.

"We are being faced with more and more welfare and cruelty in our areas, than we've ever seen before. We are in a very sad situation, in that people feel the need to do this instead of trying to ask for help."

Residents can help raise the plight of these pups by searching #WRStwice and re-tweeting our tweets or sharing the stories on WRS hosts Bromsgrove District Council's Facebook page.

WRS Joint Committee Chairman Cllr Mark Bullivant said: "I cannot bear cruelty to animals and I am delighted at the success of this campaign already and thanks go to the officers involved. But we need to keep this message in the headlines especially as we approach Christmas when it seems like a good idea to buy a new pet. We need people to think twice about whether they can afford to keep a dog and we definitely need to encourage residents to report cases of cruelty so we can stamp out this needless suffering."



If you want to report a case of cruelty or need help with re-homing your pet, you can call the dog warden service on 01905 822799 who will be happy to help.

All of the service's press releases can be found on the service's website by following this link or pasting it into your search engine:

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

Financial Implications

None

Sustainability

None

Contact Points

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Background Papers

Appendix A: Performance Indicator data
Appendix B: Activity Data Report

Appendix A: Performance Indicator Data at 6-month point

| | Measure | Reporting Frequency | Quarter 2 Performance | Background |
|---|--|---------------------|---|--|
| 1 | % of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction | Quarterly | 77.2% (75.8% Q1, 76.6% Q2) (77.3 for 2013/14) | 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 | 96.3% (97.6% Q1, 94.3% Q2)) (92.3% for 2013/14) | 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 | 93.7% (95.3% for 2013/14) | Based on the proportion of businesses meeting the key purpose of producing safe food. The number of inspections for each district is included in the activity data report for each district. |
| 4 | % of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 st April each year | Annually | 6.3% (4.7% for 2013/14) | Based on proportion of businesses scoring 1-2 star on a national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme assessment (2 stars and below is deemed to be at risk of not producing safe food.) |
| 5 | % of applicants for driver licenses accepted as fit and proper | 6-monthly | 99.4% (99.5% for 2013/14) | Only six driver applications have been rejected by the 6 licensing committees since 1 st April 2014 |
| 6 | % of vehicles found to be fit for use whilst in service | 6-monthly | 95% (98.2% for 2013/14) | Percentage of vehicles stopped during enforcement exercises that are up to standard and safe for the purpose of acting either as a private hire vehicle or hackney carriage |

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|----|---|-----------|---|---|
| 7 | % of service requests where customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future | Quarterly | 74% (69.2% Q1, 70.6% Q2, (73.7% in 2013/14) | 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 | 40 compliments (13 Q1, 17 in Q2, 57 in 13/14) 16 complaints (5 Q1, 5 in Q2, 24 in 13/14) | Main area of complaint is either timeliness of response or where we are unable to take action, usually where a problem does not meet the threshold for statutory nuisance |
| 9 | Staff sickness absence at public sector average or better | Quarterly | 3.38 days/ employee so far this year (7.7 days/ FTE in 13/14) | Sickness recorded using host processes. Public sector average was 8.75. We will ask BDC HR to check that this is still current at the end of the Financial Year. |
| 10 | % of staff who enjoy working for WRS | Annually | NA (82% in 13/14) | Taken from the staff survey. |
| 11 | % of licensed businesses subject to allegations of not upholding the 4 licensing objectives | 6-monthly | Measure still in development | The integral design of our Uniform database has made this indicator more difficult to extract than anticipated. We will have a figure for the year-end |
| 12 | Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population | 6-monthly | 2.6 per 1000 head of population so far this year (estimated 3.16 in 13/14) | It should be noted that our busiest quarter is included in this so the rate will not increase uniformly for the rest of the year. Hence we can only give a figure so far as doubling would over-estimate the outcome. |

Appendix B: Activity Report
Attached as separate document