

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board

24th November 2016

Activity and Performance Data Quarter 2

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 second quarter of 2016/17.

The detail of the report focuses on Q2 but the presentation of the data allows comparison with previous quarters and previous years.

Contribution to Priorities

Previously, 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. This has been continued since the move to the Board on 1st April 2016.

Report

Activity Data

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

In the data report itself the Team Manager has provided a detailed outline of work done by the Community Environmental Health teams. The number of service requests in respect of food safety and hygiene are up in comparison with the same quarter last year but did not quite exceed the peaks of 2014/15. Food inspections are down on the same quarter last year. Members should note the similar pattern of work in 2014/15 where the majority of food inspection work was done in the second half of the year. We expect 2016/17 to be similar in work pattern due to the volume of reactive work being undertaken.

This reflects the resources involved in addressing the summer spike in reactive work and the fact the service is conducting some complex enforcement activities. Two food premises were formally closed during Q1 and a further closure occurred during Q2. This creates the prospect of a number of prosecution files to add to the significant number in the pipeline already, including one very involved Health and Safety case. We will continue to monitor closely progress against the full inspection programme for the year so as to ensure that it is achieved.

The service now boasts several Primary Authority agreements whereby a business enters into a contractual agreement with us on a full cost-recovery basis to receive assured advice and several new businesses have signed up to the Healthy Eating award, which again is a paid for business support process.

Nuisance complaints have shown the more usual track, creating a summer peak that did not exceed the levels of 2014/15 but the good weather ensured it was extended through September. The noise figures in the report clearly demonstrate how busy the team was over the summer months.

The figures for noise complaints against Wards appear to have returned to a more historic pattern with Worcester City, Redditch and Wyre Forest sharing the majority of wards in the top 20.

As members will see, the number of planning consultations took off during the summer and far exceeded previous years. This made huge demands in terms of numbers and complexity on the Technical Services team and so other work has been re-prioritised such as the production of routine air quality reports. The team also signed over the Energy from Waste plant at Hartlebury to the Environmental Agency from an enforcement perspective as the plant has moved into commissioning phase, which means that the permit for operation issued by the Agency comes into force. Officers also continued to work with Network Rail on the planned works at Bromsgrove station to allow for the electrification of the line to widen the range of rolling stock that can be used on the route.

The last report highlighted the falling trend in dog control issues across Worcestershire and we explained that this has been achieved by taking action to re-home persistent strays and working with owners to achieve better control, alongside communities and individuals setting up their own ways of identifying strays and getting them back to their owners. This continues to allow us to offer dog warden services more widely and we continue to bid for out of county work with our kennelling partners.

The trends on Licensing applications remain steady and in line with previous years. The last report explained that the apparent large drop in numbers of licensing service requests for the first quarter compared with Q1 2015/16 is an artefact, created by changes to how we record some of our information. The steady level of requests in Q2 might suggest we are better at recording the work now. We will see if there is an increase like

those previously shown in Q3 in previous years.

The new graph to highlight the volumes of information requests (FOI, EIR, DPA) that the service has to respond to on behalf of partners shows a similar steady trend to that of last financial year.

Performance

Second quarter performance reporting is more extensive than in Q1 with a number of the half year figures being due on some annual indicators.

Customer satisfaction was recorded at 80.4%, which is in line with last year's outrun and slightly above the Q2 figure in 2015/16. For business satisfaction we are slightly down on the outrun at 96.8% but still good. The proportion of people who feel better equipped to deal with problems for themselves in future is in line with last year's outrun at 76.9% and still in line with previous performance.

Staff sickness is higher than in previous year's at 2.77 days per FTE for the first two quarters. Initially a large contributing factor to this was several members of staff with long term health conditions that have required surgery followed by periods of rest and recuperation. We currently have one member of staff on long terms sickness, whilst others have returned to work in a phased manner.

Numbers of complaints against the service remain low but did increase with 7 in the second quarter; however they remain significantly exceeded by compliments at 28.

For the Licensed premises meeting the 4 Licensing objectives, overall there is a marginal fall in the percentage rate alleged to be failing from 3.9% to 3.7% compared with the first 6 months of 2015/16. However, as the table in Appendix 1 shows, in Bromsgrove Malvern Hills and Wyre Forest rates have increased slightly, but they decreased in Worcester City, Wychavon and Redditch. These remain low levels and show that, generally, the licensed trades in Worcestershire are well run and managed.

As might be expected from the reported busy summer, the rate of noise complaints for the first six months is higher than the same period last year at 2.06 compared with 1.87 complaints per 1000 head of population. The largest proportionate increases were in Redditch and Wyre Forest but as this is the half-year mark we cannot say if this will be followed. Given we had a relatively good and extended dry period from July through to September and beyond, it would be usual to anticipate the rate being higher compared with last year when the summer was less generous.

Finally, in respect of the first of our new indicators on income generation, the service brought in almost £136,000 in the first 6 months of 2016/17 in terms of income from non-partner sources. This represents 4.5% of the total baseline contributions of the 6 partners. This puts us on track to



achieve our income target for the year.

I am pleased to end this quarter's report by advising members that WRS were runners up in the "Best UK Environmental Health Team" category at this year's Association for Public Service Excellence awards against very impressive competition. The awards, which took place in September, exist to showcase the ability of Local Authorities to "pursue innovation within service delivery and implement new approaches aimed at improving the level of service to local communities and people". The award submission focussed heavily on the innovation and transformation work we continue to do to achieve continuous improvement within your service.

I also include below a couple of news releases from the quarter which will be of interest. All WRS news releases are available on the website.

Items of interest

Serving up Redditch's first gold award.

Staff meals at a busy Redditch manufacturer can taste even sweeter now that their canteen has become the first in town to scoop Worcestershire's top food award. Refuel, the canteen run by EDM Catering for the 300 employees at Rockline Industries in Matchborough, achieved the Gold level Healthier Choices Food Award from Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) for serving a wide variety of freshly-prepared, healthier meals with ingredients from local suppliers.

WRS Joint Committee Chairman Cllr Bronwen Behan said: "Congratulations to EDM catering for being the first business in Redditch to take a Gold award for their hard work giving more people healthier, locally-supplied options to eat."

In addition to their healthier breakfast, daytime and even night shift menu options WRS inspectors praised the passion of the catering team, who check the weather forecast before designing their menu and take the time to build relationships with their customers so they can recommend healthier options they know they'll enjoy.

Meals served there range from poached eggs to vegetable-heavy poached salmon quiches, king prawn skewers, and stuffed chicken breasts with salads.

EDM Director Peter Thomas said: "We are delighted to receive this award which recognises EDM Catering's commitment to buying local wherever possible as we deliver a well-balanced, healthy eating range of menu options for our customers at Rockline".

Aspire Health & Fashion Event 2016

On Saturday 10th & Sunday 11th September members of Worcestershire Regulatory Services, Environmental Health Team promoted the Healthier Choices Food Award to members of the public. During this event, which was organised by Worcester BID, they had a stand in Worcester City Centre High Street.

Leaflets with details of all the food businesses who have achieved the Healthier Choices Food Award were given out to the public and a profile on each business was displayed on our stand. Members of the public were also asked to nominate any other food businesses who they believe would be eligible for the award.

Contact Points

Simon Wilkes Head of Regulatory Services
01562-738088
Simon.Wilkes@worcsregservices.gov.uk

David Mellors, Community Environmental Health Manager
01562 738060
David.Mellors@worcsregservices.gov.uk

Background Papers

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

