

Worcestershire  
**Regulatory Services**

*Supporting and protecting you*

# Activity Report 2017/18

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District Council  
[www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)

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**Wyre Forest**  
District Council

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# Foreword

Welcome to the first set of activity data for 2017/18. As you will see from the graphs, the year started with a bang, with reactive demand up in a range of areas creating pressure on our teams. The good weather at the end of May and in June meant that our Summer nuisance demand spike started early so officers have been busy dealing with noise and similar issues. We have still managed to deliver a reasonable number of food inspections.

Whilst I mention food, we were visited by the Food Standards Agency in May for an audit and their response to how we do things in Worcestershire was very positive, even though we need to improve things.

Air quality continues to create interest with challenges to central government policy focusing minds on the problem. The team responded to the Governments new proposals on behalf of partners and will be presenting to Worcester City's committee in the Autumn. No doubt other partners will also be interested going forward.

With this being just a few aspects of what we deliver on your behalf, it looks like it will be yet another busy year for your teams



Simon Wilkes  
Head of Regulatory Services

# WRS Headlines

## Quarter 1

### Feed The Bins, Not The Gulls

During June, Worcester City launched the 'feed the bins, not the gulls' campaign. A significant part of this campaign was implemented by WRS including; management of the contract to undertake the egg replacement work in the city centre, exploring the potential deterrent to nesting that red rooves may present and liaison with residents and businesses wishing to take their own action or complain. Red Kite Pest Control have replaced gull eggs for rubber dummy eggs in nests on city centre rooves for many years but this has been widened to include new properties this year. The advice issued to businesses has changed to reflect the work they can do to reduce the suitability of their own rooves for nesting as well as action they can take to reduce the impact of the gulls such as car ports to prevent gulls leaving mess on cars and advice to eateries on preventing food being taken.

### National Licensing Week

During National Licensing Week (June 19th to 23rd) Licensing Officers and Officers of the Gambling Commission made a number of visits to licensed Gambling premises (Betting Shops, Adult Gaming Centres and Bingo Halls) across the County. The results of which only showed minor infringements of licence conditions which were easily rectified. These results showed that the majority of these types of premises are well run with little disorder.

### Taxi Enforcement

The countywide Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle enforcement program has begun with the Bromsgrove District; this being the first of many enforcement exercises planned across the county in the coming year. A number of vehicles were taken off the road until faults were rectified - as they were found to be not fit for the purpose of carrying passengers; further exercises are planned and will be carried out shortly.



### **Best Bar None**

Licensing Officers have participated in the steering group to introduce the Best Bar None scheme in Bromsgrove; with a number of the Licensing Officers attending the opening launch. All Licensing Technical Officers will be undertaking a specialised training programme to become Best Bar None assessors in early September.

### **Licensing Appeals**

There have been two appeals in the courts for taxi related matters.

The first was an appeal by an applicant who had been refused a licence to drive hackney carriage and private hire vehicles as he did not meet the Council's medical requirements set out in Policy. In short, he did not meet the DVLA Group 2 standards adopted by the majority of Councils as is best practise and was therefore refused a licence. The decision of the Council Sub-Committee was upheld by the courts. Costs of £400 were awarded against the appellant in this case.

The second, this was an appeal by an existing licensed HC/PH driver against the decision of the Council's Licensing Sub Committee to revoke his driver's Licence. A brief summary of the case a decision was made to revoke the licence based on the fact that there had been a recent complaint of abusive behaviour towards a Council staff member employed as a Civil Enforcement Officer whilst undertaking her duties and also concerns over his lack of

### **Food Safety Audit**

In May we were audited by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). Whilst for legal reasons the audit focussed on Wyre Forest District Council the auditors accepted that our working practices applied across all the Districts. The physical audit took place over two days with the FSA piloting a new approach which was more of a critical friend than the previously arduous audits known to many local authorities. The audit outcome has been very positive with a strong acceptance of our new ways of working. The full report will be published on [www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/auditandmonitoring/auditreports](http://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/auditandmonitoring/auditreports)

### **Food Safety Prosecutions**

Grillicious Pizza and Grill in Mount Pleasant, Redditch, who had been visited by officers several times and ignored advice, was recently prosecuted with fines and costs of nearly £9,000 imposed; a sign of the impact of the Sentencing Guidelines which came into force in 2016. A rat infested Wychavon distribution warehouse, Mayfair Holdings, was fined over £4,000.

### **Food Hygiene makes the news**

The local press, particularly the Worcester Evening News, are now regularly running stories on low scoring businesses. We both welcome and encourage this as it can help drive up safety standards as the businesses which have featured all reported a drop in sales. The good news is that they have also given coverage to business improvements.

### **Fire Safety Checks**

WRS officers have been working with the Fire Authority on a project making fire safety checks on people living over food businesses, both tenant and owner-occupied. This predates the Grenfell House incident. Regrettably, the Fire Authority has had to take enforcement action in a large number of premises.

### **Congratulations to our Environmental Health Student**

Our student, Evesham based Lisa Maskell, who was on placement with us for three years and helped develop the Healthier Choices Food Award, achieved a First Class Masters Degree in Environmental Health from Birmingham and was promptly offered a job at Selfridges!

### **Worcestershire Food and Drink**

There is continuing development of the Worcestershire Food and Drink Project, funded by the Worcestershire LEP. We recently commissioned a stand alone website through Worcester-based Source Design and Print and are working with Hale Events, organisers of The Food and Drink Trade Show at the Three Counties Showground, to make an even better experience for our local food businesses in 2018. We are also working with Visit Worcestershire to promote our Level 4 and Level 5 rated food businesses on their new website from January 2018.

### **Café owner fined**

The owner of a café in Redditch has been fined for breaches of food safety and hygiene regulations. Keith Robert Troth pleaded guilty at Redditch Magistrates Court on Thursday May 11 for failing to ensure food was protected against contamination, lacking the required procedures for cleaning and food control, and failing to keep premises clean and in good condition. The case was brought after a routine food hygiene inspection at Mr Troth's Cerrones Café in Oxleasow Road in October last year had found mouse activity and a build-up of dirt and debris. The court heard that Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) had carried out the inspection while the café was open and serving food on 5 October 2016. Mouse droppings were found in food preparation areas and on the counter top next to dishes of cooked food and a drinks machine. Mouse activity was also noted in storage areas, including on open lids of food storage containers, and a pack of blue paper rolls containing chewed up paper and mouse droppings was also found. A build-up of dirt and debris had also indicated a lack of cleaning procedures. Magistrates took account of Mr Troth's limited finances, lack of any previous convictions and early guilty plea in fining him £500 for four offences, and awarding costs of £1,000 plus a victim surcharge of £50.

## Air Quality & Contaminated Land

The government's draft air quality management plan for the UK was finally launched following the initial delays in its release. The plan follows the concept of action plans already implemented at local authority levels and introduces a second higher tier of air quality management responsibility through the creation of a joint enterprise between DEFRA and DFT. This entity has the task of resolving air quality issues in locations that suffer from extensive problems such as London, Birmingham, Glasgow, Liverpool and the development of nationwide nitrogen dioxide control amongst other initiatives. The higher tier system is facilitated through new powers that enable the declaration of Clean Air Zones (CAZ) within cities.

The strategy has very little effect upon Worcestershire's air quality management plans as it is not identified in the government's consultation as being an area of national concern. Nevertheless there appears to be some cross over between national initiatives and that of the local policies. WRS are keeping a close eye on these developments as DEFRA deploy the changes it is anticipated that there will be a difference in the way grant funding will be allocated when schemes are eventually announced with the need for councils to have much more radical and ambitious plans on how they deliver air quality improvements.

At a local level work continues to focus on detailed assessments with air quality with exceedances of government NO<sub>2</sub> objectives being identified in 2 additional locations within the city centre at Foregate Street and London Road. Other locations identified are Wychbold which is also exceeding the same standard. Long awaited planning work has also commenced with County Highways and the District Council in Wyre Forest to re-model the traffic which navigates the Horsefair in Kidderminster which has the worst air quality in the county. It is anticipated that the work when complete will significantly reduce air pollution exposure through this important road junction.

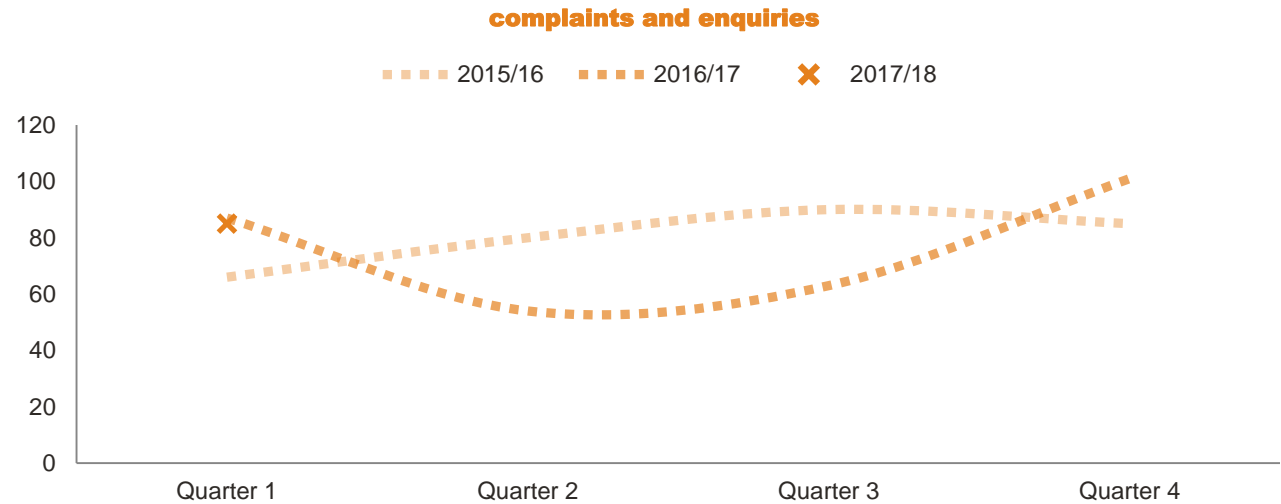
# Dog Control

The chart (top right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to dog control. Types of cases recorded under this category include fouling and persistent straying, dangerous dogs and welfare. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of dogs recorded by WRS as lost, found or seen straying.

*Comments*

*Dog control statistics include work carried out by WRS on behalf of Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucester City Council and Tewkesbury Brough Council.*

*Historically the general trend in numbers of stray dogs reported is reducing and this would appear to continue this financial year. The spike towards the latter end of this first quarter may be associated with dog owners leaving doors open during the warm weather period but the numbers are lower than the last two years for this period. There is currently no discernible difference between the numbers of service requests this quarter. Generally these requests consist (in equal volume) of reports of gog aggression (to other dogs), reports of persistent dog straying and fouling and requests to handover their unwanted dog. WRS do not accept unwanted dogs unless all other options have been exhausted and a charity has been identified which will take the dog ensuring the Council does not pay kennelling fees. As well as helping dog owners with unwanted dogs it reduces the charges local authorities accrue in dealing with a dog once it is abandoned. The number of welfare cases where an investigation or improvement Notices are serviced are thankfully low at 4 for the period.*



## Environmental Permitting

Following the last activity report announcement DEFRA have now approved the welcome 4.75% increase in permitting revenue following a 6 year freeze. Finance departments of all partners have been informed of these changes and should be recharging as necessary. 2016-17 annual DEFRA compliance returns on behalf of the partners have been completed in line with required schedules.

WRS continue to work strategically with the major manufacturers industries in the region and are pleased to confirm that the joint working between WRS and Weinerberger Brickworks on the Hartlebury Industrial estate has finally delivered compliance with required BAT criteria for noise emissions following an investment of around £100,000 in attenuation improvements by the company. WRS has also commenced work on the environmental compliance aspects of Doncasters Precision Castings' investment programme following a successful planning application to extent the facility in Droitwich.

Applications and interest in the installation of Small Waste Incineration plant (SWIPS) have been observed during the 1st quarter. These have been made by a number of small waste management businesses. It is anticipated that the interest has come about due to the increasing cost of landfill which is pushing waste management firms harder into looking at other means of reducing cost through environmentally responsible means. WRS have recently permitted one plant in Long Marsden and is currently reviewing several others in various locations within the County.

Developments in primary authority work within the permitting sector continue and WRS have been working with the FBCA federation of burial and cremation authorities regarding the possibility of a working agreement.



# Food Safety

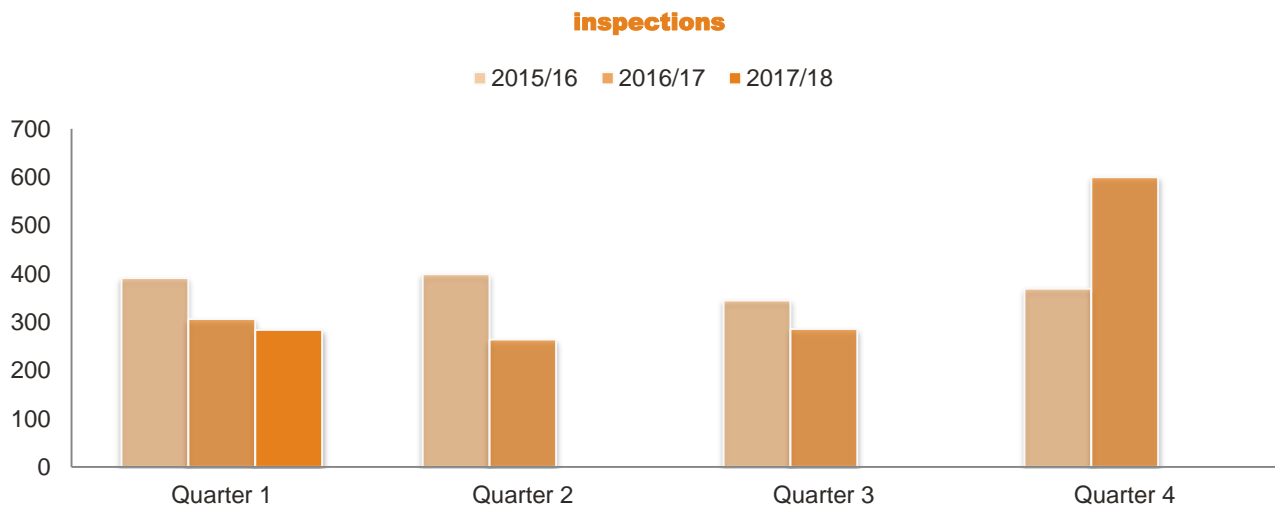
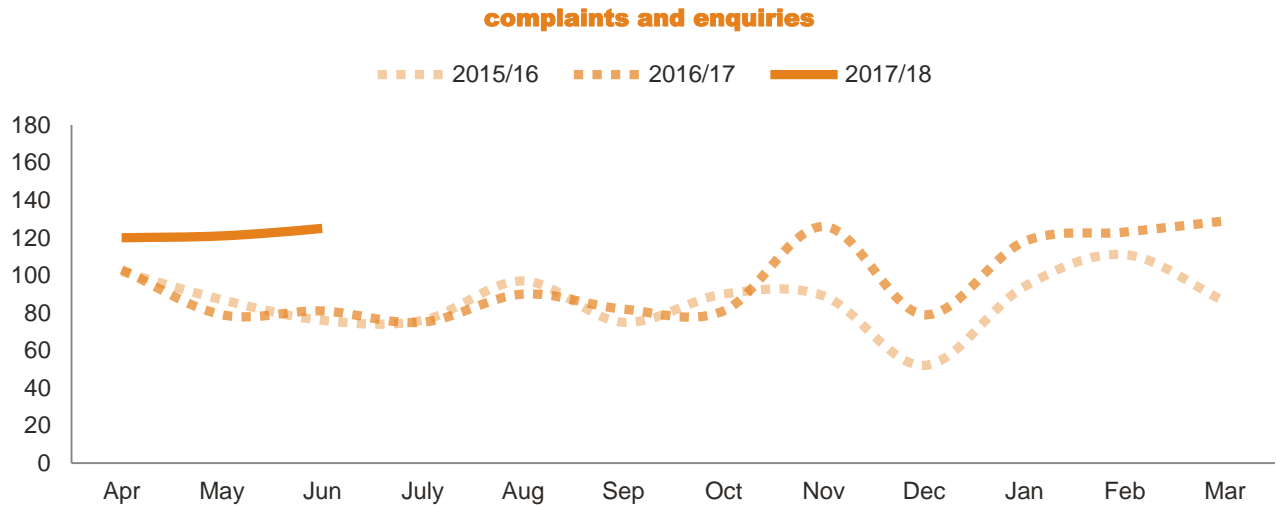
The chart (top right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to food safety. Types of cases recorded under this category include hygiene of premises complaints, complaints about food products and requests for business advice. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of inspections carried out by WRS at premises included in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS).

*Comments*

*During quarter one, the number of food safety cases received by WRS increased by approximately 45% compared with 2015. The highest percentage of cases were enquiries and complaints about food products.*

*In addition to food safety complaints and enquiries 284 inspections were carried out across the county at premises included in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. During this period 97.9% of rated premises across Worcestershire included in the scheme were broadly compliant whilst 2.1% were non compliant.*

*During May the Food Safety function was subject to external audit by the Food Standards Agency. The accompanying Board report refers.*

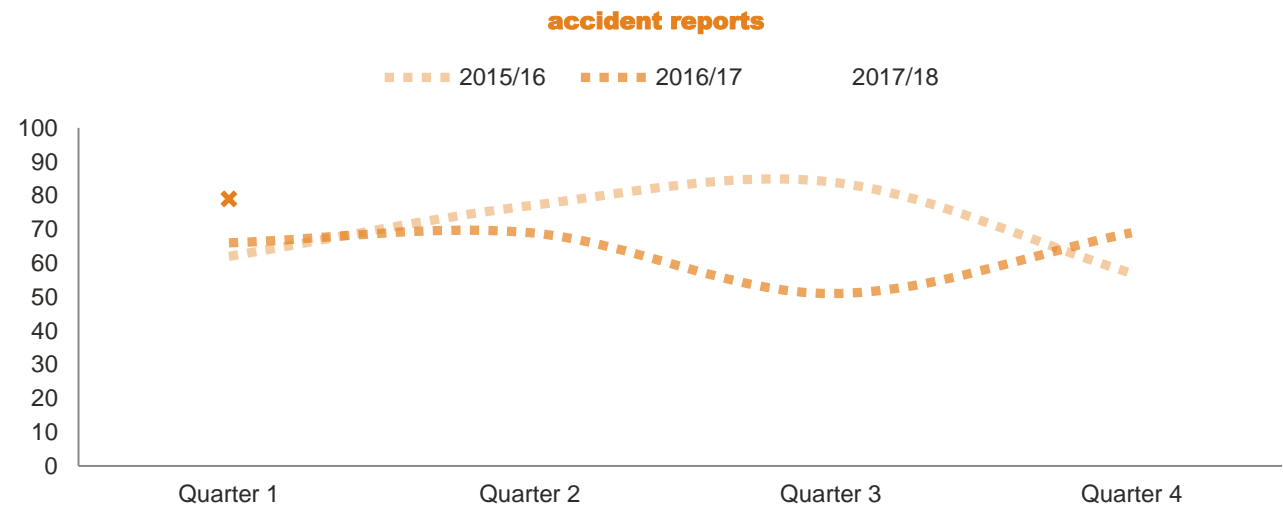
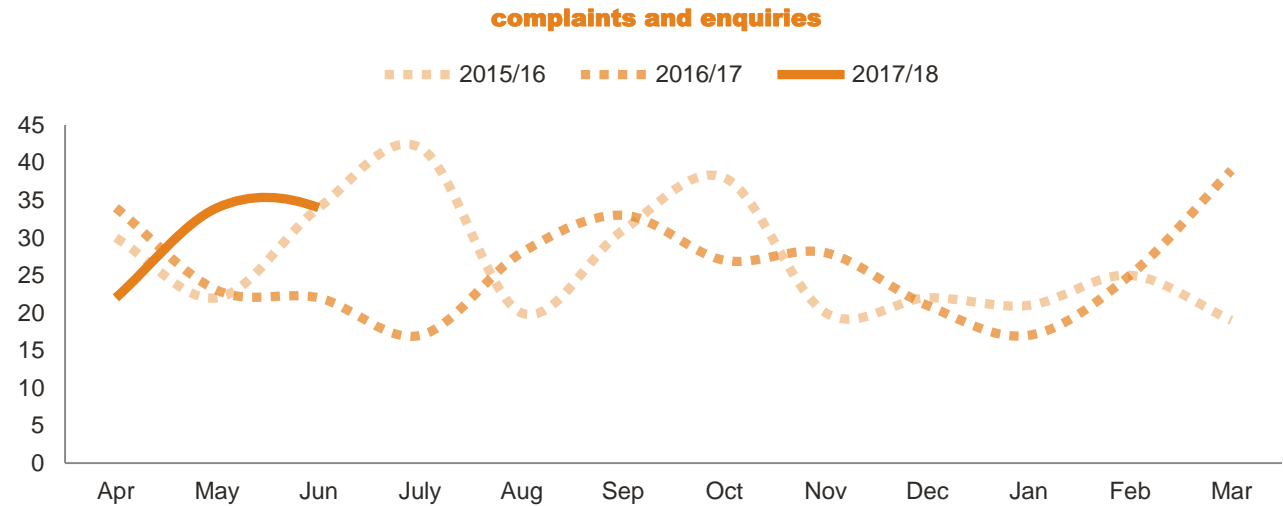


# Health and Safety

The chart (top right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to health and safety. This includes requests for business advice. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of notifications received by WRS relating to accidents.

*Comments*

*During quarter one, WRS recorded 225 cases relating to health and safety, an increase of 13.6% compared to the previous quarter. The increase follows a greater number of health and safety cases but is not considered to be significant given the relatively low number of cases. The highest percentage of cases were enquiries, complaints and accident reports relating to an employee or self-employed person being away from work for over seven days.*

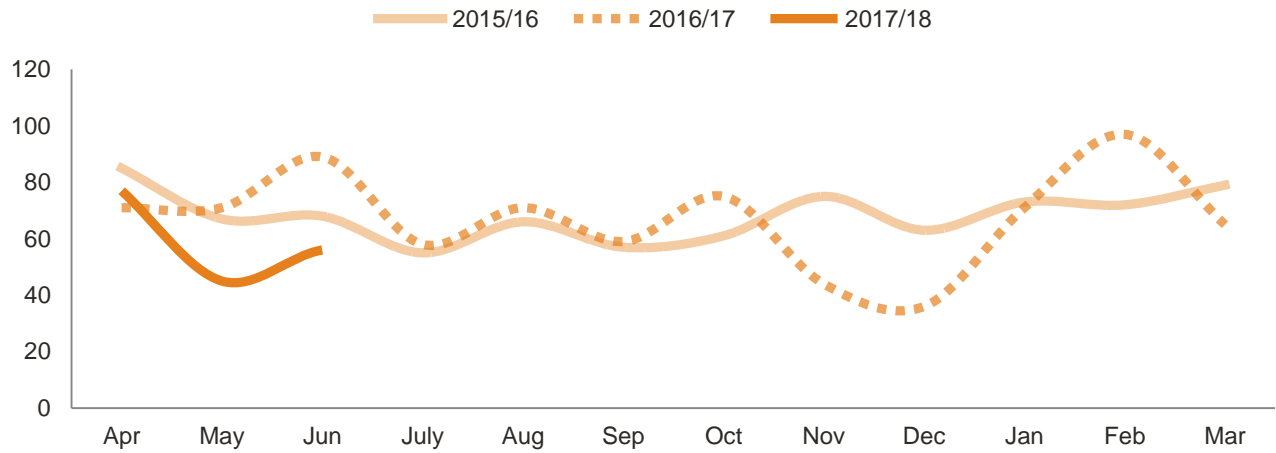


# Information Requests

The chart (right) shows the number of information requests recorded by WRS over a three year period.

Information requests relate to the following:

- Environmental Information Requests
- Freedom of Information Requests
- Requests for information under the Data Protection Act 1998 (generally received from partner agencies)



## Comments

*This area of work is completely reactive, although there has been a drive to proactively publish information held by WRS on our website, so enquirers are directed there in the first instance. A review of FOIs will be undertaken this year to identify commonly requested datasets so that where possible they are published ahead of requests being received.*

# Licensing

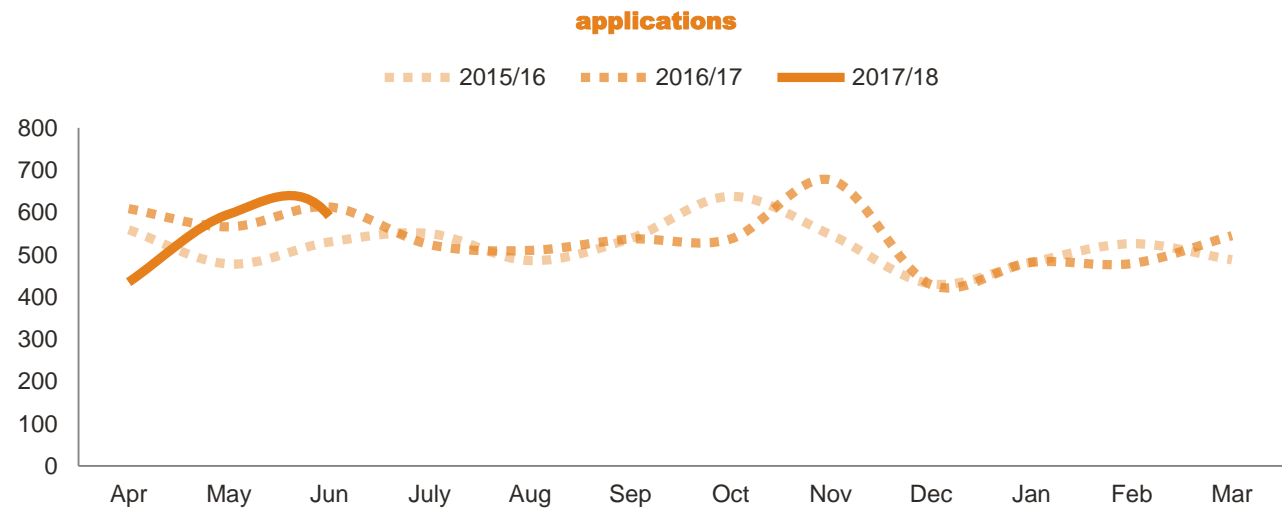
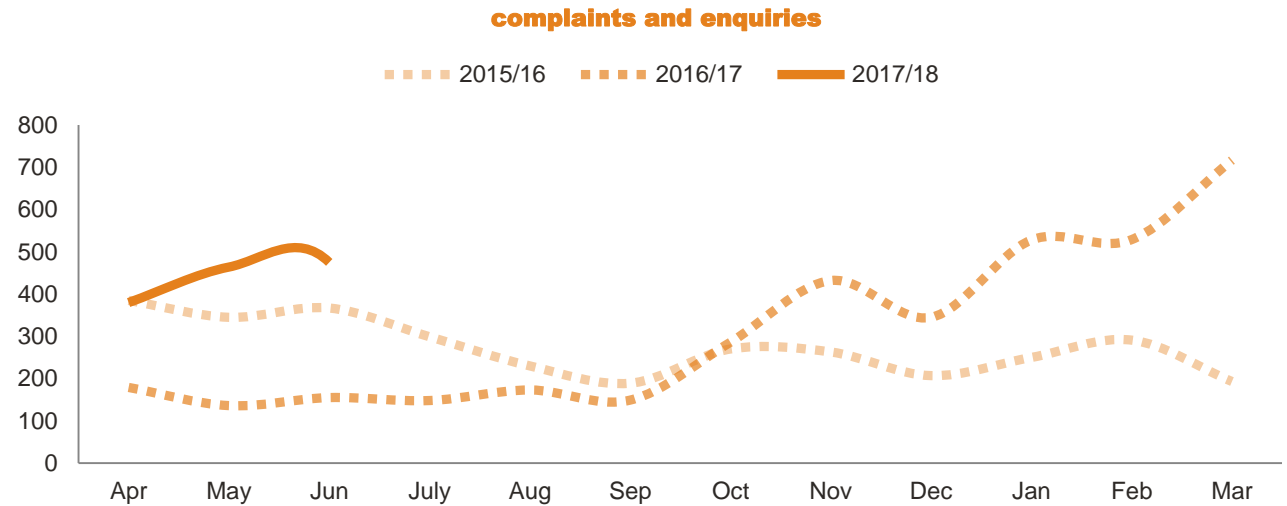
The chart (top right) shows the number complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to licensing. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of licensing applications.

Licensing complaints, enquiries and applications relate to the following:

- Alcohol and entertainment
- Animals
- Caravans
- Gambling
- Scrap metal
- Sex establishments
- Skin piercing
- Street trading
- Taxis

### Comments

*Licensing has continued to undertake it's duties in relation to all licensing matters with the first three months of 2017/18 being busier than last year. We have seen increases in both the number of licences and the number of enquiries that we deal with on a daily basis. The number of Temporary Event Notices seems to have hit the service a little earlier this year this was probably due to the exceptionally good weather we had in the late Spring/early Summer*

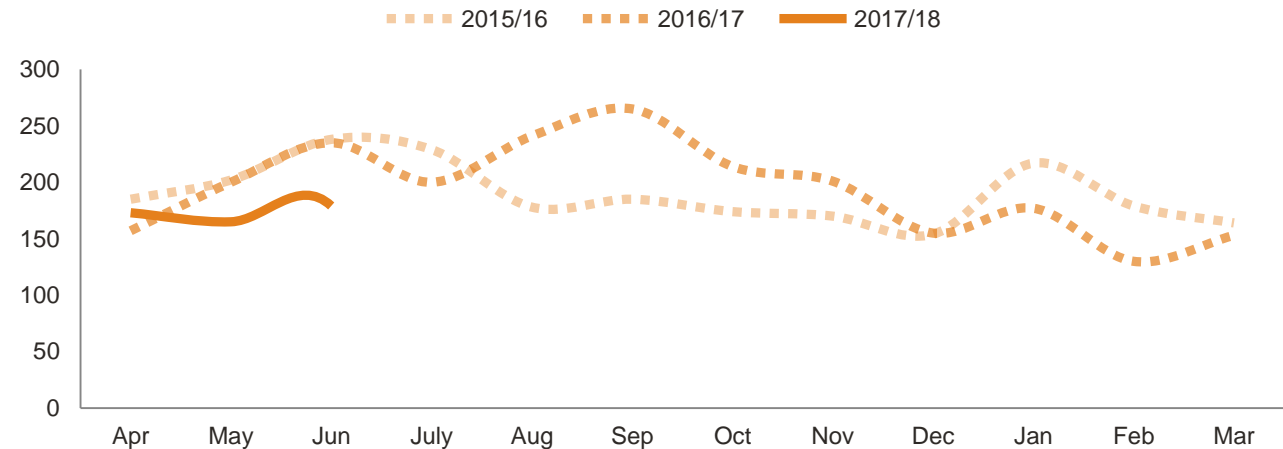


# Planning

The chart (right) shows the number of planning requests received by WRS over a three year period. The majority of these requests are consultations but can also include requests to discharge conditions.

Planning requests relate to the following:

- Air Quality
- Contaminated Land
- Environmental Permitting
- Food
- Health and Safety
- Nuisance / Noise



## Comments

*The number of planning cases referred to WRS during the period has increased from last quarter with a 13.4% increase but is a reduction of around 13% compared with 2015 and 2016. Some of this may be attributed to the continued improvement with Malvern Hills, Wyre Forest, Worcester City, Redditch and Bromsgrove authorities in utilising the Planning Checklist to reduce unnecessary consultation and identify where Environmental Health issues are pertinent to be raised. The main areas requiring WRS advice continue to be Noise/Nuisance and contamination issues. Nevertheless, officers have observed an increase in the number of complex cases over the same period such as the Birmingham resilience project and the 'Lakes application' in Bewdley.*

*WRS has now completed its draft version of a Supplementary Planning Document for environmental protection and will shortly commence discussion with Strategic planning departments with a view of adoption across all partner authorities.*

*Contaminated Land*

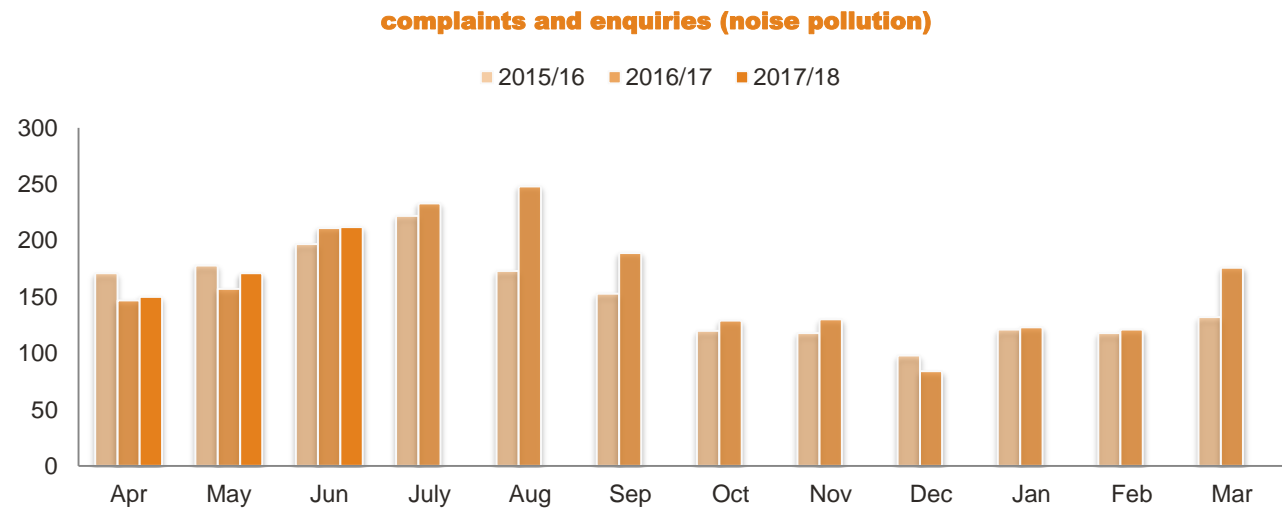
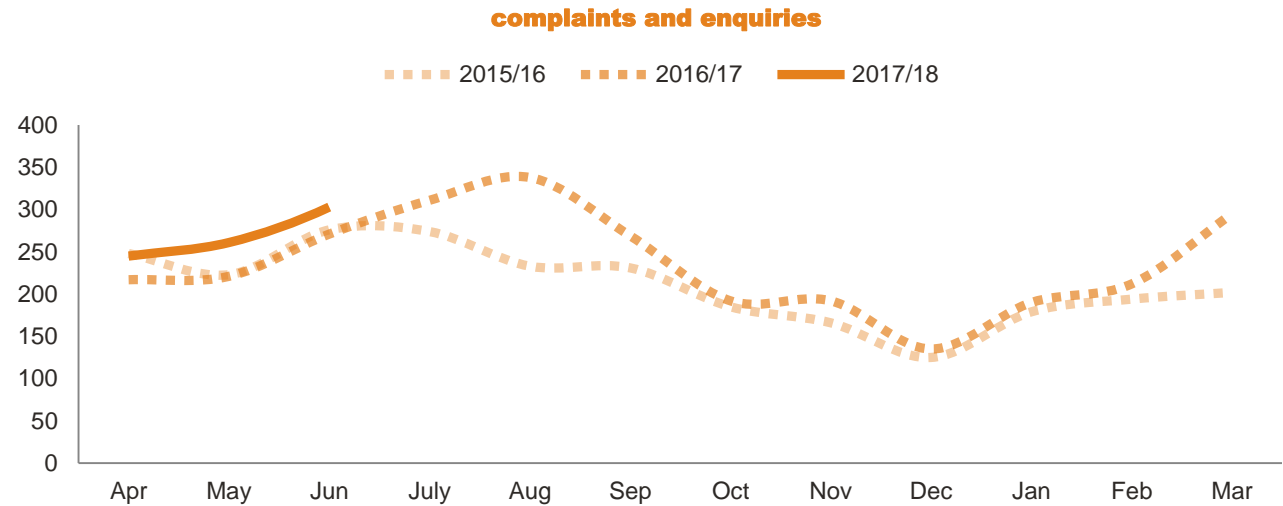
*Historical support work continues with Marlbrook Tip in Bromsgrove to ensure its safe management along with Marl pool Drive in Redditch following recent subsidence work to a property.*

# Pollution

The chart (right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to pollution. Types of cases recorded under this category include contamination incidents, air pollution (smoke, fumes and gases), light pollution and noise pollution. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries relating to noise pollution.

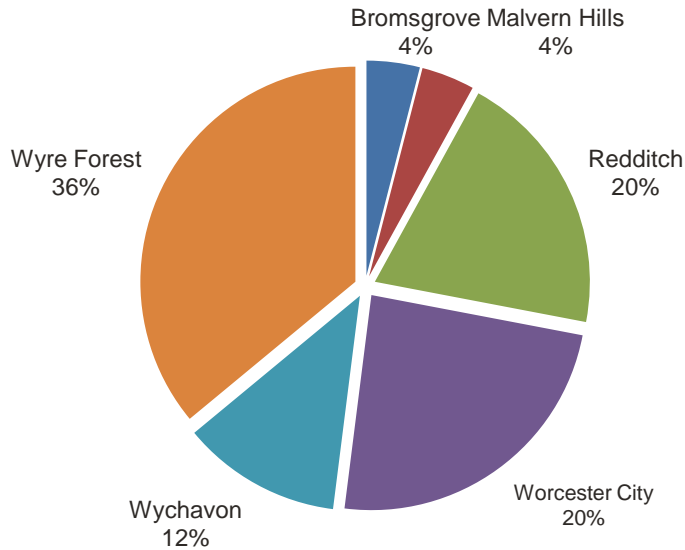
### Comments

*Cases relating to nuisance and public health (page 16) have increased by 20.9% compared to the previous quarter and 26.5% compared with 2016. This is at a time of year when we have historically seen a spike in complaints anyway and follows a sustained period of good weather. The highest percentage of cases related to noise from domestic properties and smoke nuisance. Around 65% of pollution cases related to noise nuisance. The tolerance of the public in respect of issues with their neighbours and business appears lower than ever with expectations of what we can do to help resolve their problem far higher than noted previously and regularly above what is achievable in law. These demands made over and above the legal capability of the service and the number of complex cases being contested through the court system requires careful management to ensure that they do not impinge on the sustainability of the service in respect of nuisance work and our ability to deliver on our pro-active activities such as food safety inspections. We shall continue to monitor and manage this demand through taskings.*



# Noise Pollution

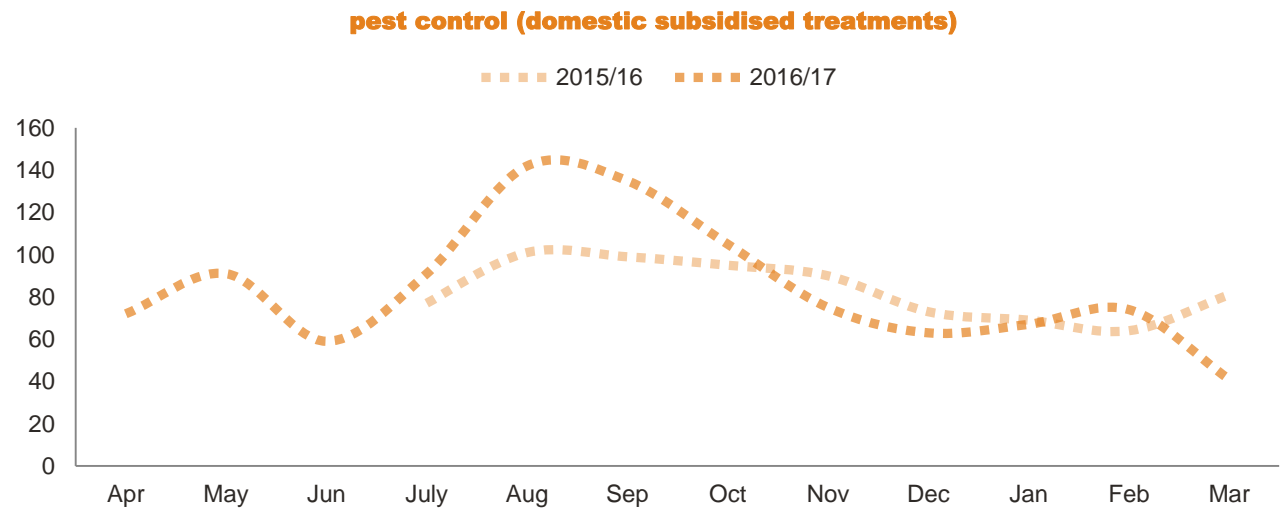
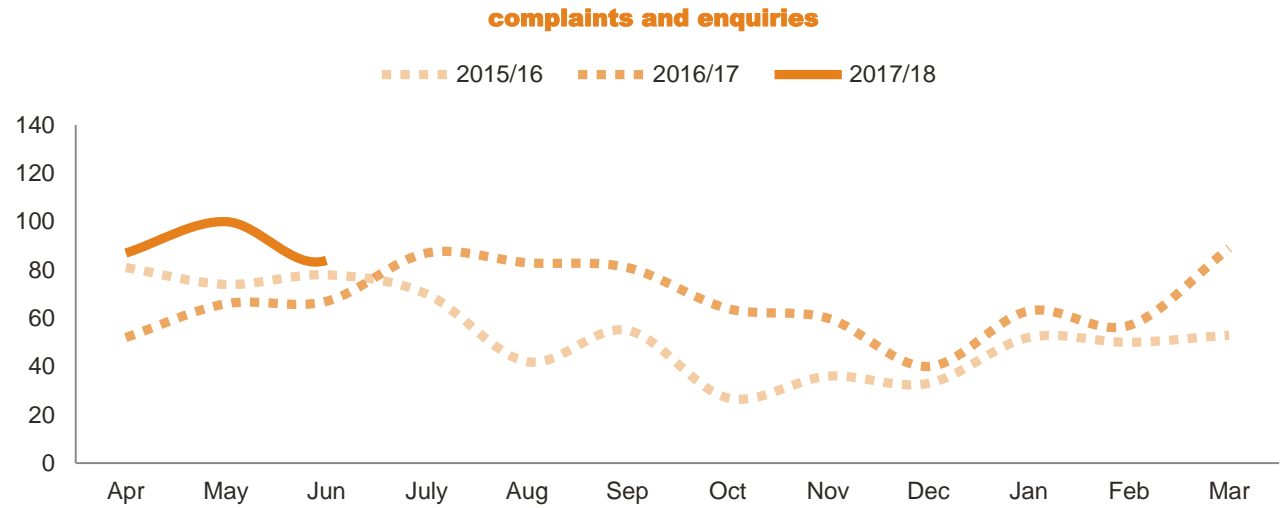
The table (right) shows the top 25 wards within Worcestershire with the highest number of noise pollution cases. Population and incident rates are also shown and reflect the recent boundary changes in Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest. The chart (left) shows the top 25 wards by district, for example, 20% of wards highlighted in the table are located within Worcester City.



Ward	Total	Population	Rate (%)
Greenlands	28	9,122	0.31%
Blakebrook And Habberley South	26	9,000	0.29%
Cathedral	24	10,835	0.22%
Batchley And Brockhill	22	8,553	0.26%
Bedwardine	21	8,279	0.25%
Central (Redditch)	20	6,494	0.31%
Mitton	18	9,752	0.18%
Abbey	18	6,197	0.29%
Foley Park And Hoobrook	17	9,914	0.17%
Broadwaters	17	9,108	0.19%
Upton And Hanley	17	4,186	0.41%
Franche And Habberley North	16	9,783	0.16%
Bengeworth	16	6,793	0.24%
Arboretum	16	6,195	0.26%
Areley Kings And Riverside	15	8,261	0.18%
Bewdley And Rock	14	8,542	0.16%
Warndon	14	5,934	0.24%
Aggborough And Spennells	13	8,685	0.15%
Nunnery	13	8,087	0.16%
Astwood Bank And Feckenham	12	6,042	0.20%
Pershore	11	7,485	0.15%
Droitwich East	11	5,554	0.20%
Saint Stephen	11	5,233	0.21%
Sanders Park	11	3,463	0.32%
Wyre Forest Rural	10	8,967	0.11%

# Public Health

The chart (top right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to public health. Types of cases recorded under this category include accumulations, public burials and pest control. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of subsidised pest control treatments have been carried out by contractors at domestic properties within Worcestershire.

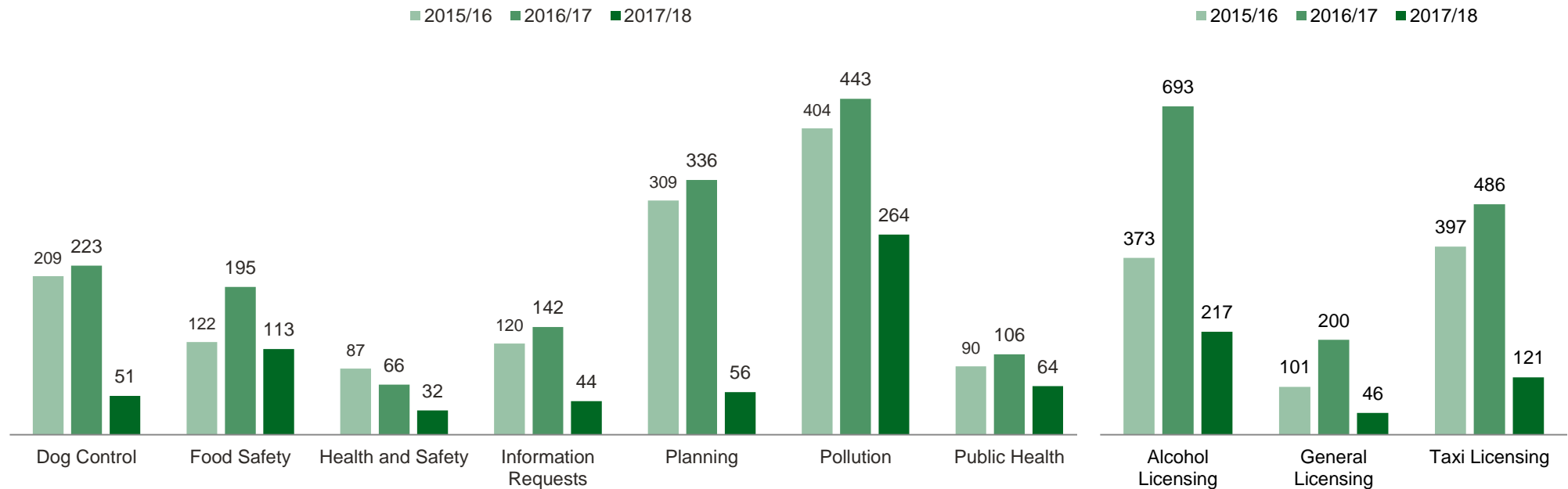
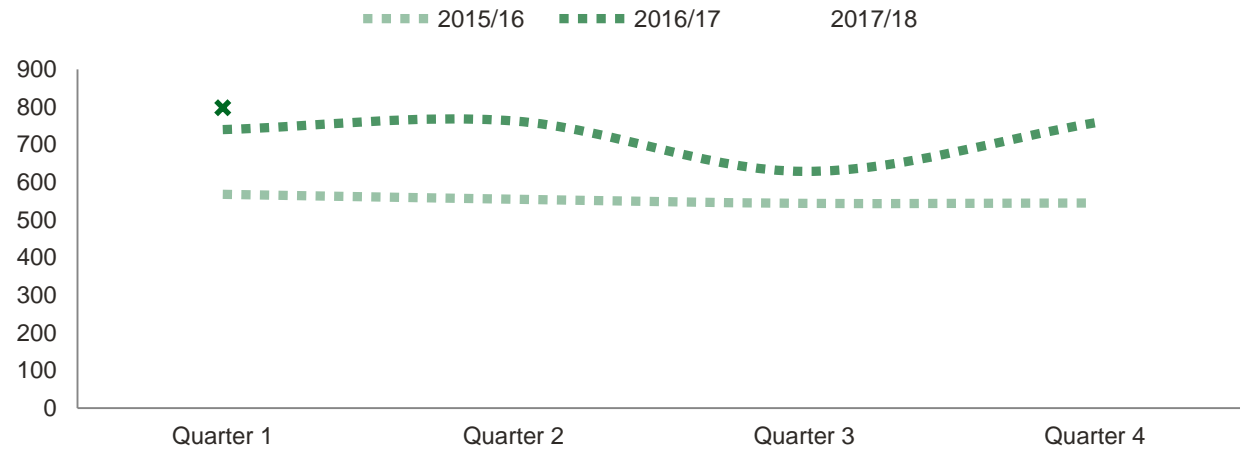






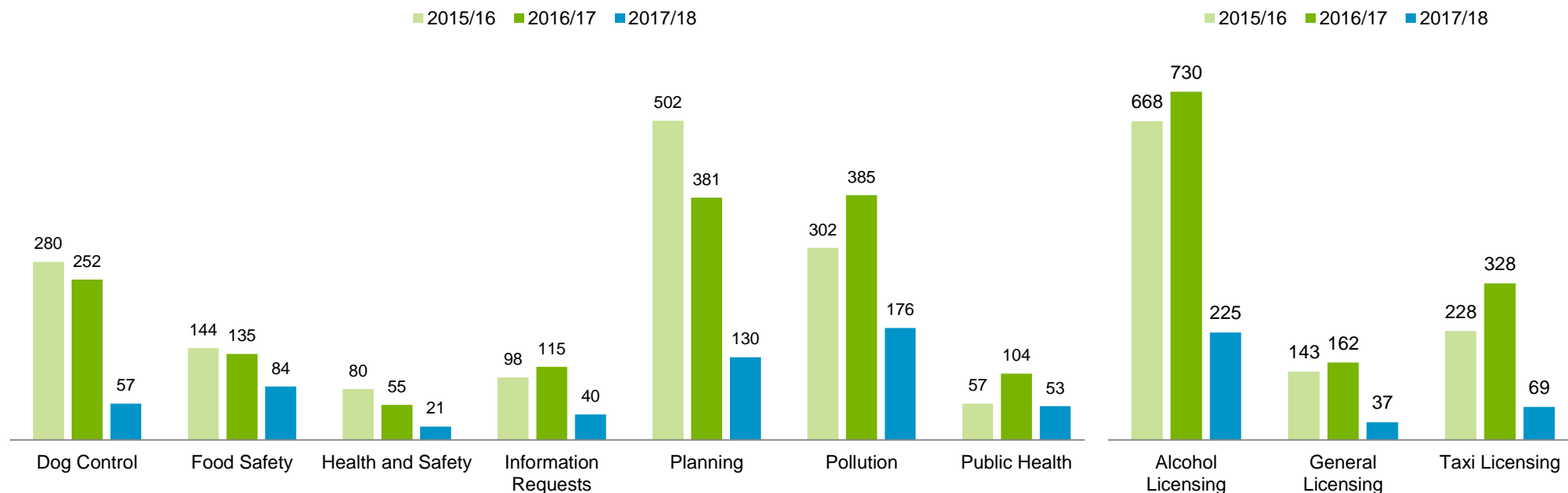
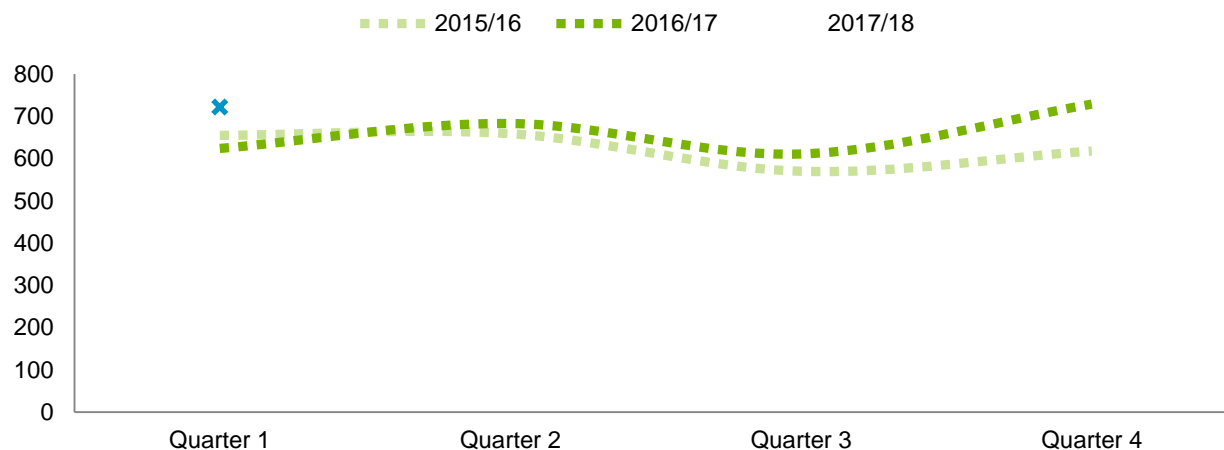
The data on this page relates to **Environmental Health** and **Licensing** complaints, enquiries, applications or notifications where the subject or enquirer was located within the district of **Bromsgrove**.

*Note: The charts (below) show the total number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. Whilst the totals for 2015/16 and 2016/17 reflect the entire financial year, the total for 2017/18 is a 'year to date' figure and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.*



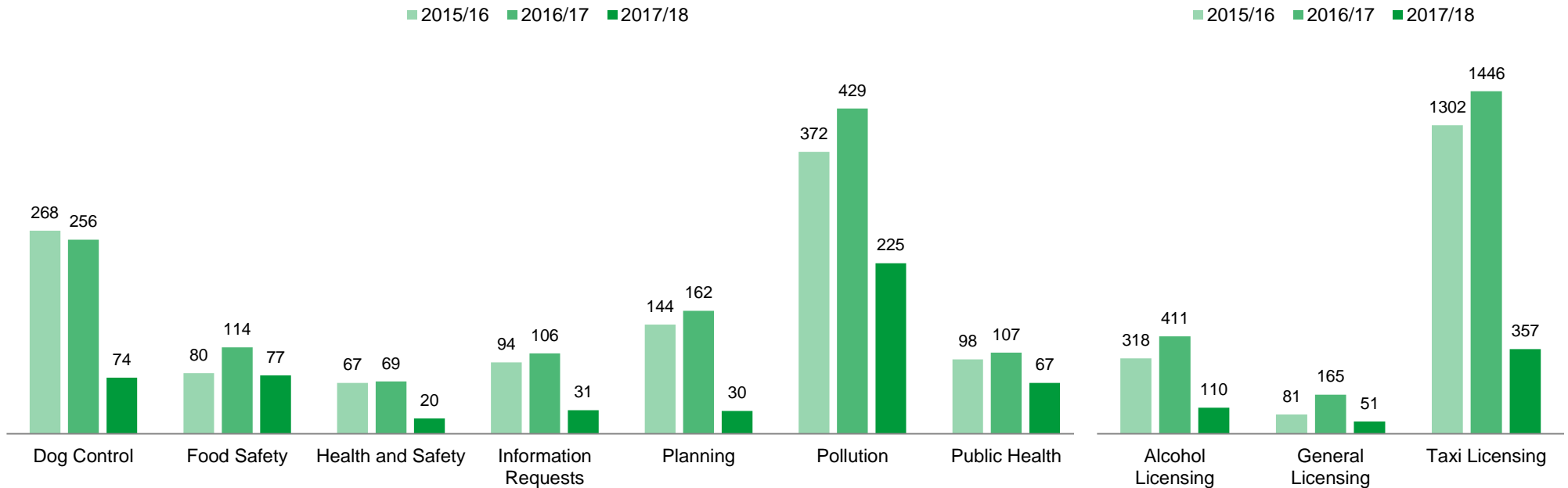
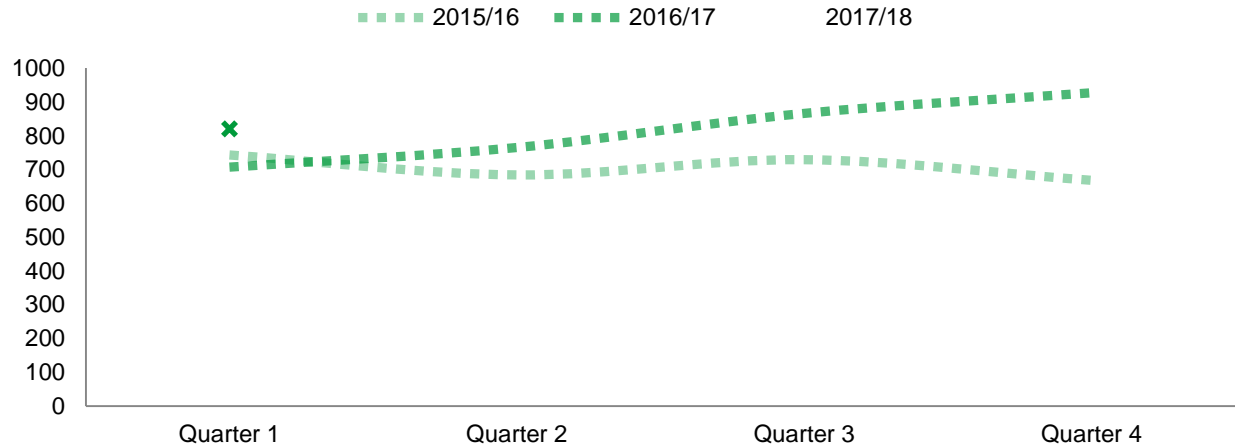
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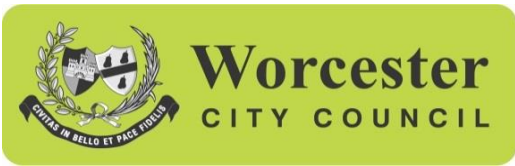
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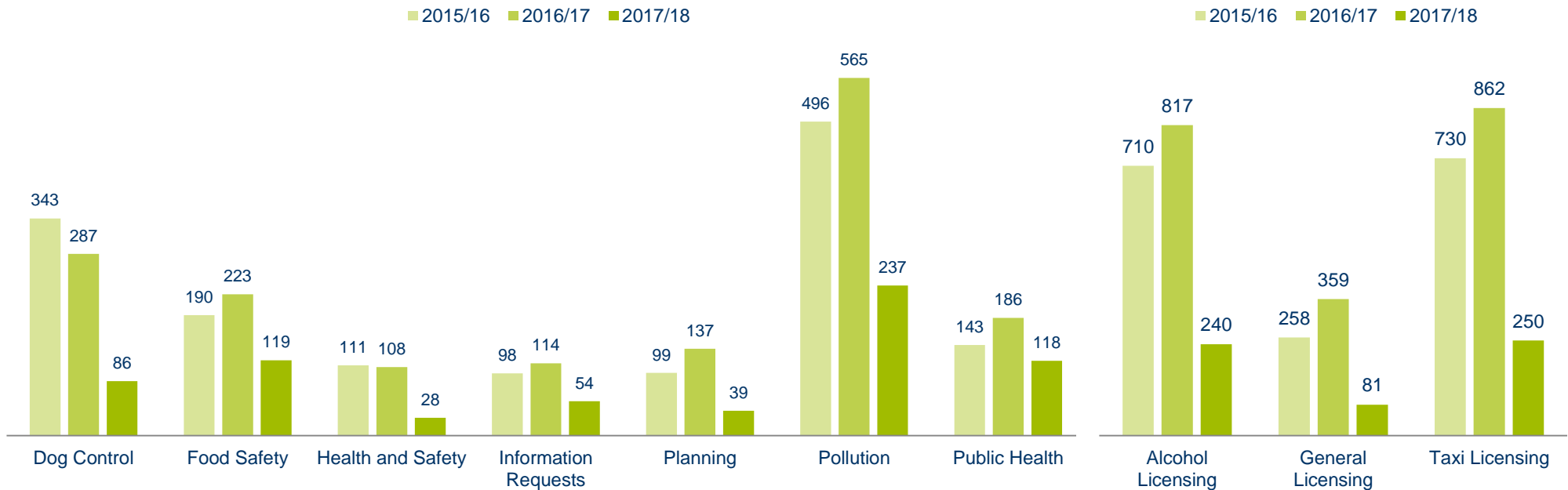
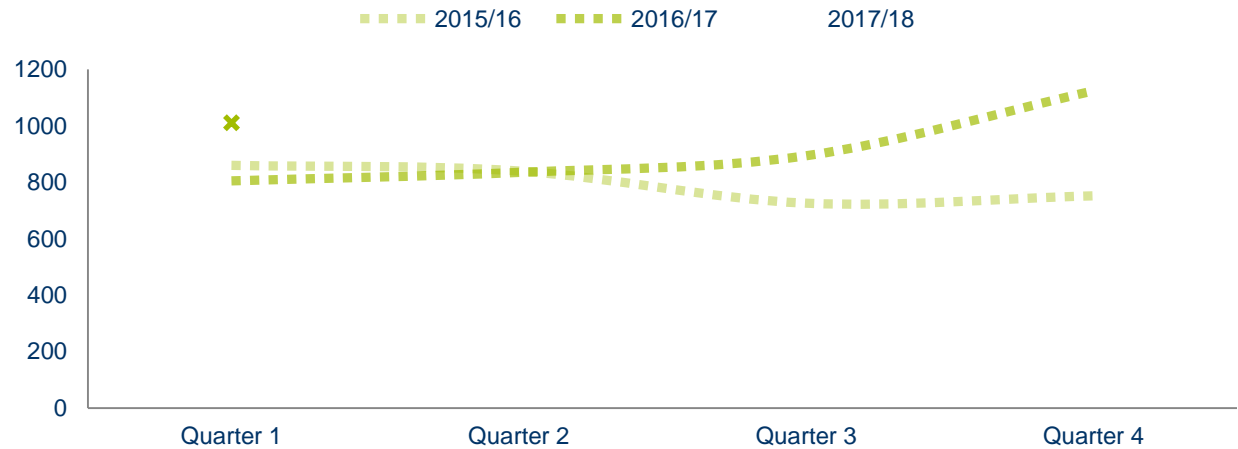
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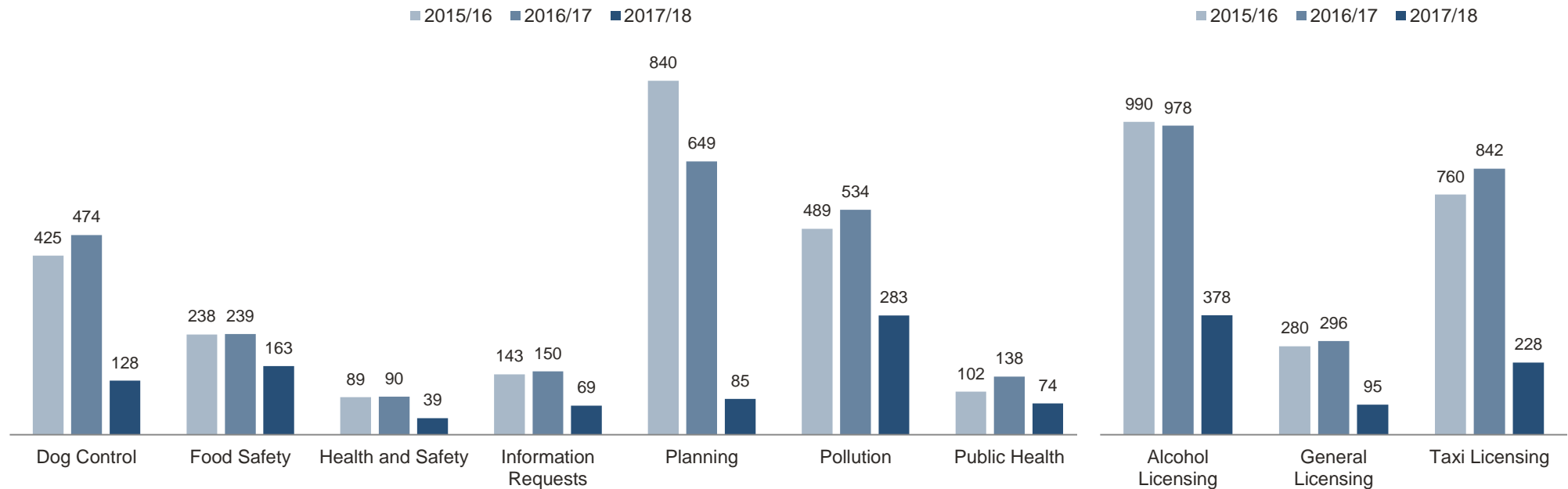
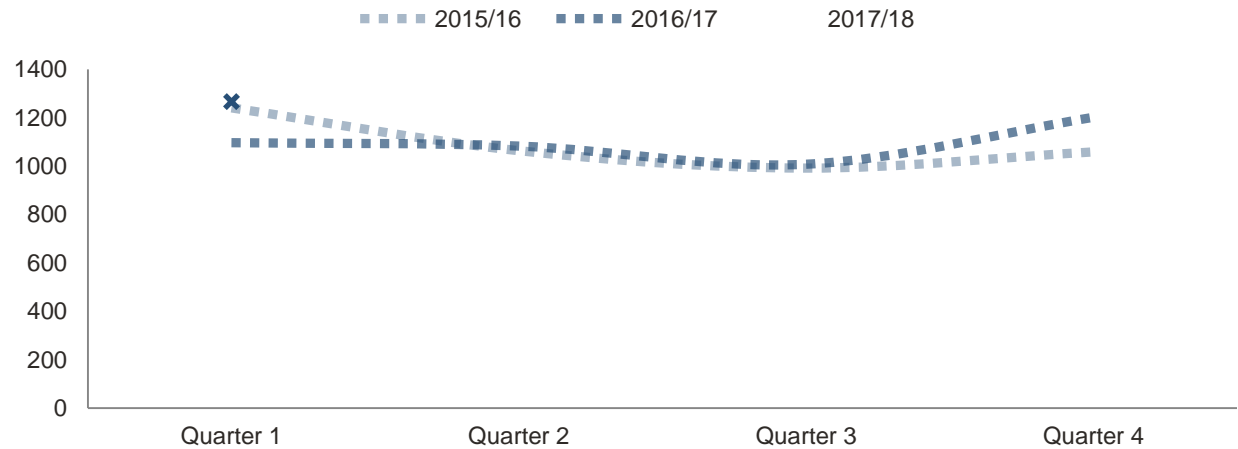
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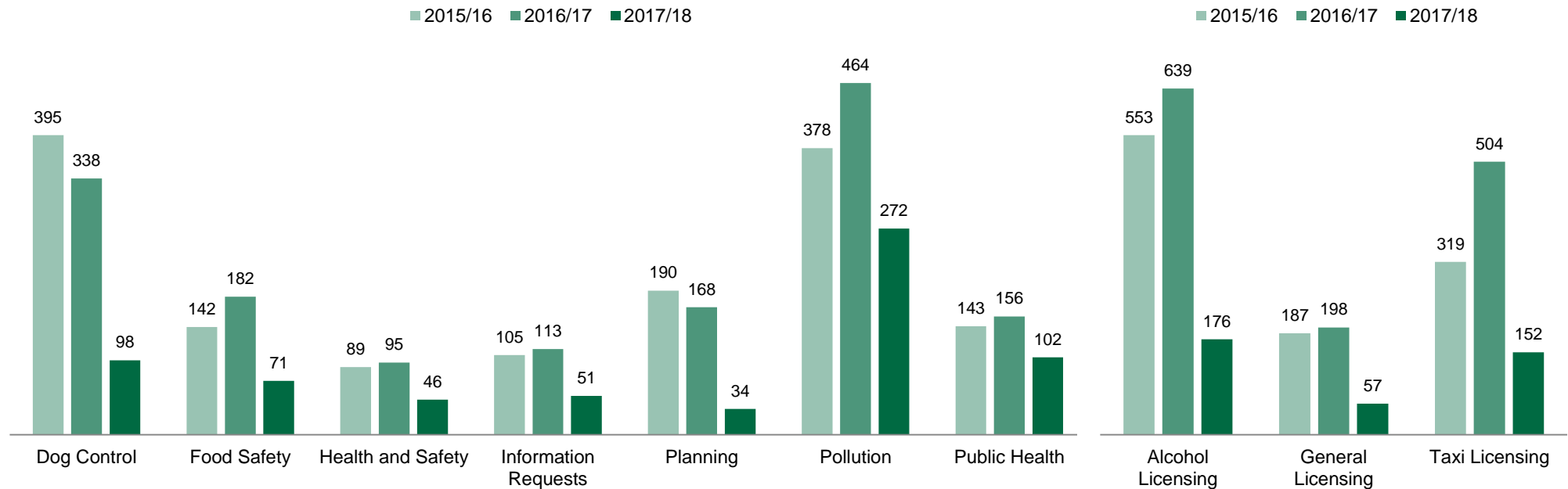
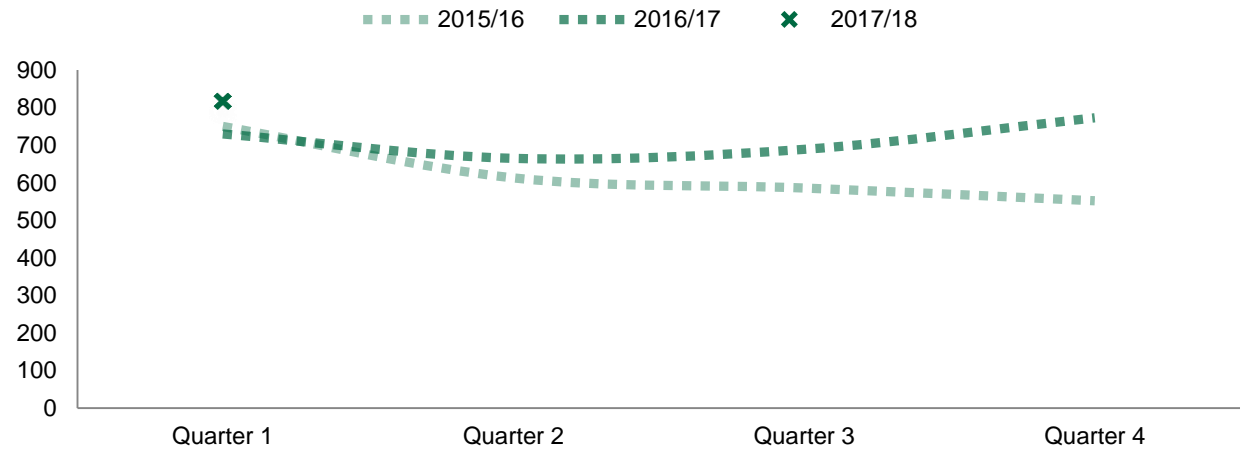
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The data on this page relates to **Environmental Health** and **Licensing** complaints, enquiries, applications or notifications where the subject or enquirer was located within the district of **Wyre Forest**.

*Note: The charts (below) show the total number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. Whilst the totals for 2015/16 and 2016/17 reflect the entire financial year, the total for 2017/18 is a 'year to date' figure and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.*



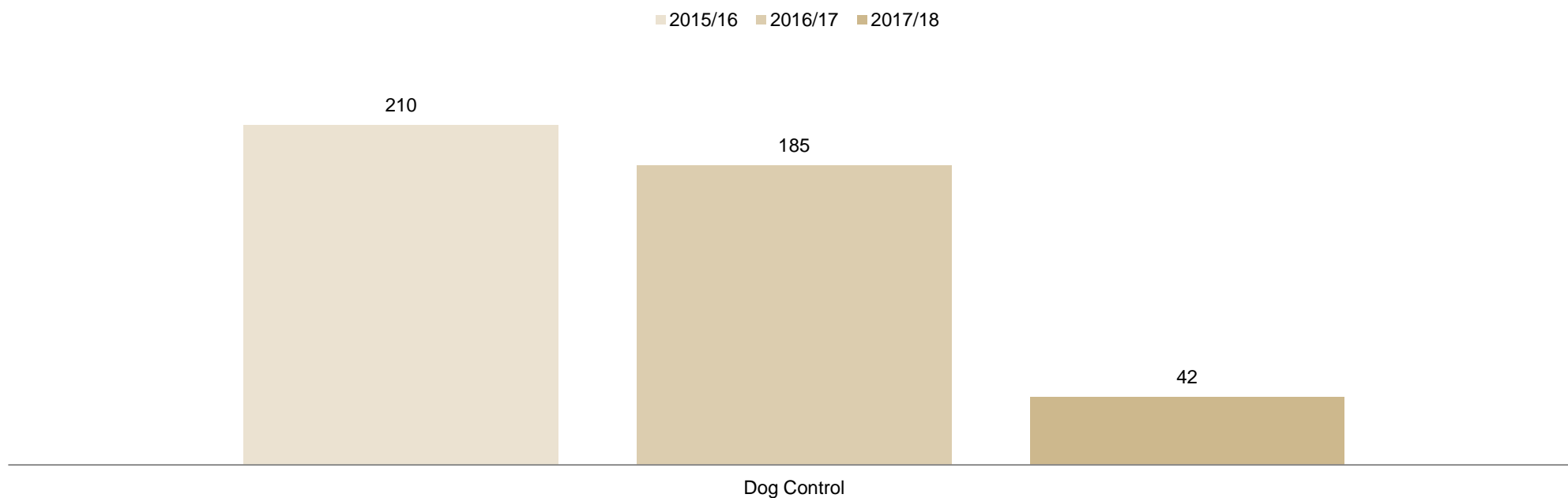
# Cheltenham Borough Council



The dog control work WRS undertake for Cheltenham Borough Council is part of a three year contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities (from 2017) to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was renewed following delivery by WRS for the previous 3 years and has been highly successful in reducing stray dog numbers for Cheltenham Borough Council, utilising existing WRS resource and expertise. Such arrangements enable economies of scale to be realised and the continued retention of valuable assets to the benefit of Partner Authorities.

The numbers of stray dogs are reducing annually as is consistent with trends in Worcestershire.

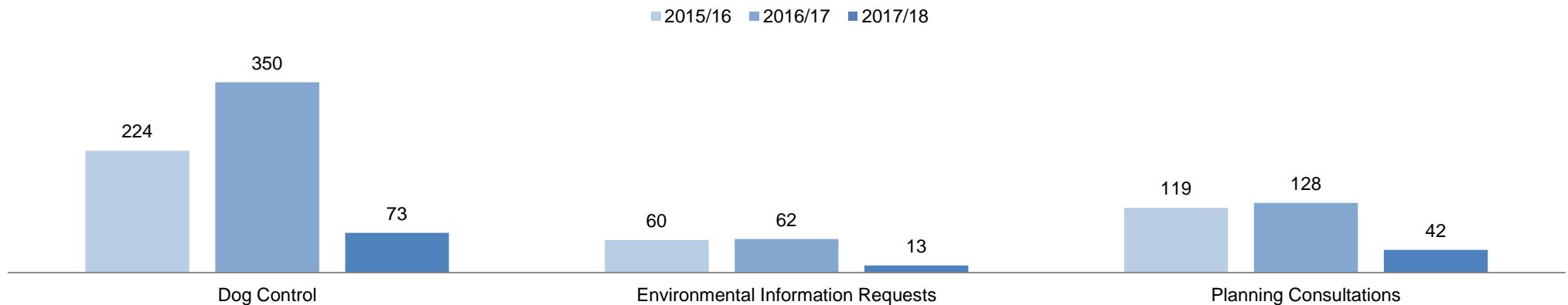
*Note: The chart (below) show the total number of cases recorded against the function undertaken by WRS. Whilst the totals for 2015/16 and 2016/17 reflect the entire financial year, the total for 2017/18 is a 'year to date' figure and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.*



The dog control work WRS undertake for Gloucester City Council is part of a three year contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities (from 2017) to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was renewed following delivery by WRS for the previous 3 years and has been highly successful in reducing stray dog numbers for Gloucester City Council, utilising existing WRS resource and expertise. Such arrangements enable economies of scale to be realised and the continued retention of valuable assets to the benefit of Partner Authorities.

As with other Gloucestershire and Worcestershire authorities the numbers of stray dogs are reducing annually. The number presented here shows the numbers in 2015/16 were particularly low. Gloucester City changed their procedures during that year whereas previously dogs were automatically returned to owners for free where the owner could be easily identified and found. Only where this could not be done were the dogs recorded as strays and passed to WRS. It is anticipated that this year numbers of stray dogs will be lower than last year's high and will continue to drop as the message gets about that it costs to get your dog back if you let it stray and those owners who refused to pay had their dogs rehomed. Unlike Worcestershire, for Gloucester City Environmental Information requests are lower than previous years, although requests for advice on Planning Consultations (for Contaminated Land) are higher than previous years. In addition to the above we also undertake some Environmental Permitting work for Gloucester that is part of their ongoing inspection programme. During this period WRS continued to provide advice and assistance with a Metal Processing facility that presented significant noise and odour issues to local residents as well as a number of permit renewals.

*Note: The chart (below) show the total number of cases recorded against each of the functions undertaken by WRS. Whilst the totals for 2015/16 and 2016/17 reflect the entire financial year, the total for 2017/18 is a 'year to date' figure and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.*



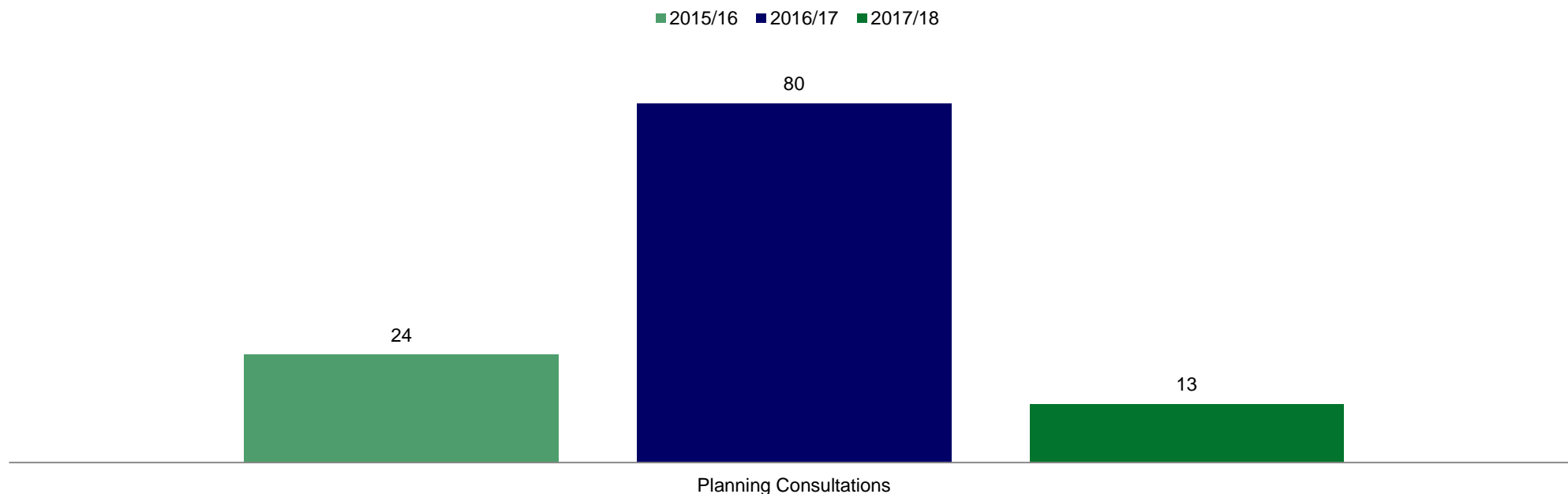


# South Gloucestershire Council



South Gloucestershire being located on the outskirts of Bristol was subject to significant contaminative industries and activities historically. Pressures on brownfield development recently have presented the authority with a large volume of planning applications on significantly contaminated and complex sites. For a number of years now WRS has been asked to assist with this work focusing on the complex sites, so whilst numbers of referrals remain low (and lower than last year) they continue to be time consuming and complex. The expertise the Partner Authorities pooled with the formation of WRS has enabled us to provide a high standard of service during this period.

*Note: The chart (below) show the total number of cases recorded against the function undertaken by WRS. Whilst the totals for 2015/16 and 2016/17 reflect the entire financial year, the total for 2017/18 is a 'year to date' figure and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.*



The dog control work WRS undertake for Tewkesbury Borough Council is part of a three year contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities (from 2017) to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was renewed following delivery by WRS for the previous 3 years and has been highly successful in reducing stray dog numbers for Tewkesbury Borough Council, utilising existing WRS resource and expertise. Such arrangements enable economies of scale to be realised and the continued retention of valuable assets to the benefit of Partner Authorities. Whilst it should be acknowledged that we are only in quarter one, the number of dogs collected or reported as strays are significantly lower than previous years. This follows the national trend in dogs being reported to Dog Wardens as discussed previously. The number of planning applications that WRS are requested to provide nuisance or air quality advice on continue to be high. If the current numbers referred to WRS continue at this rate, it will be far higher than last year at 344 applications.

*Note: The chart (below) show the total number of cases recorded against each of the functions undertaken by WRS. Whilst the totals for 2015/16 and 2016/17 reflect the entire financial year, the total for 2017/18 is a 'year to date' figure and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.*

