

## WRS Board: 5<sup>th</sup> October 2017

### Activity and Performance Data Quarter 1 (2017/18)

#### 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

The detail of the report focuses on Q1 but the actual data allows comparison with previous years.

#### Contribution to Priorities

Board 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.

#### Report

##### Activity Data

During the current assessment period WRS recorded 396 cases relating to food hygiene and safety. This total is consistent with the previous quarter but an increase of 45.1% compared with the same period in 2015. The highest percentage of cases were enquiries (52.0% - 206 cases) and complaints about food products (31.6% - 125 cases). In addition to food safety complaints and enquiries, 293 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, so there is no overall sign of businesses being less well run. During May, the Food Safety function was subject to external audit by the Food Standards Agency. The outcome is covered in a separate Board report.

During the current assessment period WRS recorded 225 cases relating to health, safety and wellbeing, 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 overall. The highest percentage of cases were general enquiries relating to health and safety (22.7 – 51 cases), health and safety complaints (21.3% - 48 cases) and accident reports relating to an employee or self-employed person being away from work for over seven days (16.4% - 37 cases). The highest number of infectious disease recorded cases related to salmonella (17 cases) and



cryptosporidium (13 cases).

Cases relating to nuisance and public health increased by 20.9% compared to the previous quarter and 26.5% compared the same period in 2016. This is at a time of year when we have historically seen the beginnings of a spike in complaints anyway that follows into the Summer season. It is likely that a sustained period of good weather in late May and June was the reason for the increase. Reports later in the year will show if the trend continued.

The highest percentage of recorded cases related to noise from domestic properties (22.2% - 388 cases) and smoke nuisance (9.9% - 173 cases). Overall, around 65% of pollution cases related to noise nuisance.

Staff report that the tolerance of the public in respect of issues with their neighbours and businesses appears to be reducing, with increasing expectations of what the local authority can do to help resolve problems. These expectations regularly exceed what is achievable in law. Whilst some mediation can be attempted between neighbours, unless there is a breach of the legal provisions, which have a very high bar, no formal action can be taken. This can be particularly problematic with businesses because the Regulator's Code, made under the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 requires that local authorities do not impose any greater regulatory burden than the law requires. This seems likely to lead to an increase in corporate complaints during Q2.

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 our tasking meetings.

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.

The team has worked closely with colleagues from Worcester City on the extension of the gull control campaign. Key messages have been posted on waste bins in the City centre and widespread local radio advertising encourages residents and visitors to “feed the bins and not the gulls.” WRS has looked at options with Red Kite pest control for increasing egg replacement and the Licensing team will look to work with businesses with street amenity permissions to get food waste cleared from outside tables as quickly as possible.

The Licensing team has also been engaged in a number of other initiatives. The launch of Best Bar None in Bromsgrove was attended by the team and follows last year’s launch in Worcester City. The first of the year’s taxi enforcement evenings took place, also in Bromsgrove, looking for vehicles that were not meeting the council’s rigorous standards for maintenance. A number of vehicles were taken off the road until faults were rectified. National Licensing week in June also saw a number of joint visits being undertaken with the Gambling Commission to licensed outlets across the county.

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.

## **Performance**

Performance reporting is limited in quarter 1, with the main focus on customer feedback. Business satisfaction remains excellent at 98.4% but satisfaction for non-business customers is slightly down at 71.7%. This is partly a reflection of some of the difficult cases that the team had dealt with combined with being unable to always resolve problems. People continued to find contacting us useful with over 72% still saying they felt better equipped to deal with their own problems in the future. This is slightly below but close to previous figures.

Staff sickness for Q1 is 1.19 days per FTE. The majority of this is down to long term sickness. Managers are seeking to address this where possible but there are a number of officers in need of surgery which will cause this figure to increase during the year. There were only three corporate complaints during Q1 but we are expecting to see this increase in Q2. We had 32 compliments in Q1 demonstrating that staff continue to deliver good outcomes for the public where they can.



Finally we finish with a news story that members may find interesting. All of our press releases can be found on the WRS website.

### **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 were 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.

### **Contact Points**

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### **Background Papers**

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



## Appendix B: Performance Indicator Table

(2016/17 data shown in brackets)

Indicator	Reporting period	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4/ Outrun
1. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	71.7% <b>(81.3%)</b>			
2. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	<b>98.4%</b> (92.6%)			
3. % businesses broadly compliant at first assessment/ inspection	Annually	NA	NA	NA	
4. % of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 <sup>st</sup> April each year	Annually	NA	NA	NA	
5. The proportion of taxi driver licenses issued within 5 working days of receiving a completed application (including current and clear DBS check.)	6-monthly	NA		NA	
6. % of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service Number of vehicles found defective by district and the %age this represents of the fleet county-wide	6-monthly	NA		NA	
7. % of service requests where customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	72.5% <b>(81.4%)</b>			
8. Review of register of complaints/ compliments	Quarterly	<b>3/32</b> 3/18			
9. Annual staff sickness absence at public sector average or better	Quarterly	<b>1.19</b> (1.74) days per FTE			
10. % of staff who enjoy working for WRS	Annually	NA	NA	NA	



11. % of licensed businesses subject to allegations of not upholding the 4 licensing objectives	6-monthly	NA		NA	
12. Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population	6-monthly	NA		NA	
13. Total income expressed as a % of district base revenue budget (16/17)	6-monthly	NA			
14. Cost of regulatory services per head of population (Calculation offsets income v revenue)	Annually	NA			

