

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board

16th November 2017

Activity and Performance Data Quarter 2 (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 Q2 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

The first thing to highlight in this quarter's report, because it is so well exhibited is the Summer spike in nuisance issues. Looking at the graph it is clear that the good weather during late May and June created an early spike in workload that continued to peak through July. Members may recall that the weather turned worse towards the beginning of the school holidays and whilst August was not a complete washout the weather was not the norm for the season. This is in some ways fortunate for service delivery as the July peak exceeded the highest point in the previous two years.

In the nuisance related area called public health (complaints of accumulations usually of waste, public burials and complaints about pests like mice and rats infesting nearby properties,) a similar pattern is seen, with a dip in Jun at the end of Q1 being followed by a spike during July that exceeded the high numbers in the previous two years.

Having these peaks in demand and also a number of tricky complex issues to deal with from last year meant that additional resource in the form of temporary staff had to be brought in towards the end of the quarter to help maintain the service's performance. They will remain with us while we clear this large volume of work down. As we have said previously, this is one of the great strengths of the model partners have adopted, giving the service the flexibility to reinvest income to deal with such issues.



The top 25 wards for noise show a typical distribution with the majority being across Redditch, Wyre Forest and Worcester City. One might expect this as these are more urban localities with higher population densities. At the last meeting one member of the Board asked why one of the wards in her district featured as it was unusual that it would appear. A review revealed that it was due to a single event that took place which generated significant levels of complaint from local people. This illustrates how a single event or one or two problematic premises can cause a ward that might normally be regarded as quiet to appear in the top 25. There are one or two in the current list where this is the likely explanation.

A spike occurred in food safety complaints during August and this, along with the volume of work in relation to nuisance, meant that the service was only able to undertake a limited volume of routine food hygiene inspection during the quarter. Again, retaining the services of our temporary staff for a period beyond the end of the quarter will allow some of the team to catch up on some of these inspection visits. The level of health and safety complaints and accident reporting has remained at typical levels during this quarter so thankfully not imposing any additional burdens of staff.

In other areas of the service, demand remained at typical levels for the period. Planning requests remained below the levels of previous years thanks to our colleagues successfully adopting our check-sheets to help them make best use of WRS support. The team has continued to contribute to a number of high profile appeals particularly in Bromsgrove and in Wyre Forest.

Members will recall that last meeting they received a report on the air quality work the service is doing across the County. Work continues as the service looks towards working with members at Worcester City on their task and finish group looking at air quality. The team covering Environmental Permitting has been in dialogue with OFGEM to try to get the details of all of the sites in Worcestershire that are being supported by the Non-domestic Renewable Heating Initiative where biomass (wood fired) boilers are installed to provide heat and the cost of installation and fuel used is subsidised by Government. Boilers taking funding from the scheme have been at the centre of a number of complaints in Bromsgrove and Wychavon. The team now has a list of premises and intends to review this with a view to targeted visits looking at whether sites should be operating with a permit.

Licensing work volumes remain high. Officers have continued to engage with external partners on a range of issues. Further visits were undertaken with the Gambling Commission and, as members will see from the Performance Indicators a number of stop check exercises were completed. Officers have started working with Worcester City members to develop the council's vision for its taxi fleet going forward, working with a task and finish group of the Licensing Committee. Four drivers have had their licenses suspended since 1st April for various reasons. Police investigations are on-going and, once these are completed, consideration will be given to putting the matters before Committee.

One Redditch driver suspended last year has had his license revoked by a Licensing Sub-committee following his conviction which he appealed to the higher courts and was unsuccessful.

The Licensing team has also begun preparations for training for the taxi trade on Child Sexual Exploitation. Firm plans are in place for piloting the process in Redditch and Worcester City followed by a wider roll out across the county. This will be delivered in Partnership with West Mercia Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner's preferred training provider.

Performance

Performance reporting is wider for Quarter 2 than Quarter 1. Business satisfaction remains excellent at 97.7%, slightly less than Q1 but still above last year's out-turn figure. Satisfaction for non-business customers is slightly up on Q1 at 75.6% but still slightly below last year's out-turn figure of 78.9%. This still reflects some of the difficult cases that the team had dealt with combined with being unable to always resolve problems. People who found they felt better equipped to deal with their own problems in the future was slightly up on Q1 at 73.3% and getting towards last year's out-turn of 73.8%.

Staff sickness for Q2 is up to 3.77 days per FTE. Some two thirds of this is down to long term sickness. Managers are seeking to address this where possible but, as was mentioned previously, a number of officers have required surgery and required recovery time.

There were only three corporate complaints during Q1 but we are expecting to see this increase in Q2 and 3 due to increased volume of work and the pressure it creates. Q2 gave a further 6 corporate complaints which related to dog issues, delay in answering calls or not keeping complainants informed. Where possible steps have been taken to address some of the issues. We had 32 compliments in Q1 demonstrating that staff continue to deliver good outcomes for the public. This was up to 75 at the end of quarter 2.

In relation to accusations of licensed premises not upholding the 4 objectives of the Licensing Act 2003, most of the district figures are similar to Q2 last year. Only Redditch has shown an increase from 3% to 7%. Officers will look into the background of this and seek to act where possible. Numbers will remain low and still show premises are generally well run. Rates of noise complaint are comparable with last year's Q2 figures with no significant increase or decrease in any of the figures.

The new licensing measure looking at how quickly we process driver licenses once we have a full application came in at 81%. All drivers had their new licenses issued before the old ones expired. This year is going to a base line for looking at how improvements might be made in the future.

The number of vehicles suspended during use remains a small proportion of the fleet as a whole but 21 is three times the number taken

off the road in the first half of last year. This reflects an increased level of enforcement activity by the service as we seek to argue for the introduction of national standards in all district policies and as an argument against reducing standards for vehicles in use by the trade.

Income for the first six-months of the year is £158000. This is close to the target to achieve its required income for the year and equal to 5.2% of the monies paid into the service on an annual basis by partners.

Finally, a reminder to Members that press releases and social media feeds for the service can be found on the WRS website.

Contact Points

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Background Papers

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

Appendix B: Performance Indicator Table

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%	75.6%		
2. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	98.4%	97.7%		
3. % businesses broadly compliant at first assessment/ inspection	Annually	NA	NA	NA	
4. % of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 st April each year	Annually	NA	NA	NA	
5 % of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days of receipt of a complete application	6-monthly	NA	81% NB: all other licenses in this category that fell due for renewal within the period were issued before the expiry of existing licenses	NA	
6 % of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service Number of vehicles found to be defective by district and the percentage this represents of the fleet county-wide	6-monthly	NA	Total number of vehicles countywide: 1484 Number of vehicles suspended during Q1 and Q2 21 Bromsgrove 9 Redditch 3 Worcester City 8 Wychavon 1 Percentage 1.42% of fleet.	NA	
7 % of service requests	Quarterly NB: fig is	72.5%	73.3%		

	where customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future	cumulative																												
8	Review of register of complaints/compliments	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	3/32	9/75																										
9	Annual staff sickness absence at public sector average or better	Quarterly NB: figure is cumulative	1.19	3.77																										
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	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>District</th> <th>%</th> <th>NA</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Bromsgrove</td> <td>4.7</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Malvern Hills</td> <td>3.2</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Redditch</td> <td>7.0</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Worcester City</td> <td>3.7</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wychavon</td> <td>2.9</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wyre Forest</td> <td>5.8</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Worcestershire</td> <td>4.3</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	District	%	NA	Bromsgrove	4.7		Malvern Hills	3.2		Redditch	7.0		Worcester City	3.7		Wychavon	2.9		Wyre Forest	5.8		Worcestershire	4.3			
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13	Total income expressed as a % of district base revenue budget	6-monthly	NA	5.2% £158,000 as a proportion of £3,025,000																										

(16/17)					
14 Cost of regulatory services per head of population (Calculation will offset income against revenue budget)	Annually	NA	NA	NA	