Worcestershire Regulatory Services

Supporting and protecting you

ANNUAL REPORT

2018/19

Making Worcestershire a healthy, safe and a fair place to live where businesses can thrive.

	Page
Introduction	3
Key Achievements	5
Performance	5
Performance Management	10
Service Delivery Highlights	11
Financial Management	16
Workforce Planning and Human Resources Management	17
Accommodation	18
Business Transformation	18
Risk Management	19
Equality and Diversity	19
Next Steps	19
Appendix 1: Structure (1st April 2018) Appendix 2: Risk Log Appendix 3: Revenue Out-turn 2017/18 Appendix 4: Agreed WRS Budget 20117/18-2020/21 Appendix 5: Activity summary by individual partners	20 21 24 27 30

INTRODUCTION

This Annual Report has been produced for the Joint Board in accordance with clause 11.1 of Part 1 of the Worcestershire Shared Services Partnership Agreement. The report covers the progress and performance of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) for the period 1st April 2018 up to the 31st March 2019 and reports operational activity by the relevant service elements for the financial year. The report summarises key performance data for WRS and provides a summary of the financial position. The report also meets the requirement of the Regulators Code, which requires local authorities to publish a summary of their regulatory activities on an annual basis.

Whilst none of the Partner Authorities requested budget adjustments during this year, inflationary pressures have been felt and continue to create pressures on the budget, which have been relieved by increasing income streams. If, as anticipated, the Government's changes to local government funding shift monies from lower tier to higher tier authorities, we are assuming that partners will be asking difficult questions of the service during 2019/20 about what savings might be deliverable in the near future.

The year still saw excellent work activity with very good results across a range of service areas, high levels of performance and some good outcomes from Court cases alongside a wide range of other project work being delivered. WRS managers continued to work along the lines identified in the comprehensive 3-year Business Plan for the period 2018-2021, which was adopted in February 2017, highlighting some of the potential issues faced by the service if new sources of income could not be developed and some of the threats as more local authorities consider income generation as a potential opportunity. It also highlighted the potential impacts of the proposed 2% per annum pay rises over the next 3 years and, what was at the time, the looming spectre of increasing inflation which may have diminished somewhat at the time of writing. It highlighted how close to the originally envisaged minimum service we have moved in recent years.

The cash-limited budget for Worcestershire Regulatory Services was set at £3.025M in 2016/17. This has reduced slightly going into 2019/20 to £3.017M due to a slight change in the way that Worcester City Council's taxi drivers pay for their vehicles to be tested. They, rather than WRS, will pay the garage for the test. WRS have continued to explore and develop opportunities to generate income, focusing on supplying services to other local authorities. Much of the bidding for work has succeeded because of a clear understanding of our cost-base. As managers' experience of competing for work has increased their comfort with taking some risks has also grown. We have reported previously that providing expertise in the most complex and technical areas of Environmental Health has been fruitful with our neighbouring districts as they struggle individually to maintain knowledge in such areas. The client authorities have largely continued to request such services, like Air Quality, Contaminated Land, Environmental Permit inspections and all of the associated administration. The service has also looked more widely at contracts that we might have the skills to discharge perhaps outside of our role for the partners. There are restrictions in law on how far a local authority can go in its income generation activities before it needs to compete on a level playing field with other businesses through a vehicle such as a community interest company or a trust. The service will be looking to discuss where these boundaries might lie as there is a sense amongst officers that we may be approaching them.

Whilst increasing the range of services delivered we have been successful in maintaining key arrangements with clients. Key to the success of this work has been to review charges, ensuring as well as recovering our costs they remain competitive and encourage greater commitment by the client. The level of service delivered is also important, which is why continued investment in staff is key so that they have the necessary skills and expertise in the rapidly changing field of technical specialisms.

Our three strategic priorities, developed from our partners own priorities remain the focus of what we do:

- Supporting the Local Economy
- Improving Health and Well-being
- Tackling and Preventing Crime and Disorder

We continue to support legitimate businesses where we can and, at the same time, tackle rogues and criminals to protect the public, particularly the vulnerable and honest traders. Central to this approach was and remains the availability of accurate data and intelligence sharing. Our intelligence unit coordinates and analyses intelligence obtained by WRS officers and external agencies, helping managers to target WRS resources more effectively and to forge links with other enforcement agencies and partners to share intelligence and target enforcement action. The continued co-location of the County Council's Trading Standards team with WRS helps to support this approach as well as providing an income stream to cover the cost of various support services that WRS provides to this team.

Simon Wilkes Head of Regulatory Services	Jayne Pickering Lead Financial Officer

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FOR WRS IN 2017/18:

These are covered in a number of sections below:

PERFORMANCE

Our ability to report performance has improved throughout the years with the refinement of the IDOX UNIform management information system. The corresponding demand and activity data provided to Joint Board members has continued to provide a clear picture for them of the work being undertaken by WRS.

Our key performance measures continue to focus on customer satisfaction and the positive compliance of businesses. The vast majority of higher risk businesses have been subject to inspection or some other form of suitable intervention and the key priorities of each partner council have been fulfilled. Business and consumer satisfaction have remained high in spite of changes made in some areas to service delivery. Previous year's results appear in brackets in the relevant box providing a comparative view of performance over time.

	Measure	Figure	Commentary
1	% of service requests where resolution is achieved to non-business customers satisfaction	63.0% (75.4%, 78.9%, 78.2%, 77.4%)	Based on an average score for 6 questions relating to the interaction of the service with non-business customers. Over 25% non-business customers replied to our questionnaires. 66.8% found their contact with WRS helpful and 81.8% found the information and advice provided easy to use. Both slightly lower than last year. Only 58.2% felt that the length of time to resolve their problem was satisfactory (worse than last year by 10%) and 68.3% (again, slightly worse than last year,) felt that the speed of initial response from WRS was satisfactory. This has been shared with Managers who will continue to encourage staff to make decisions quickly in relation to the progress that can be made on service requests. As we said in our edition of Members Eye on Nuisance last year, some of these matters can be difficult to resolve quickly and public expectation seems to be increasing at a time where resources are held and the law is not changing to meet their desires.

2	% of service requests where resolution is achieved to	97.2% (97.7%, 97.1% 97.9%,	Based on an average score for 9 questions relating to the
	business customers satisfaction	97%)	interaction of the service with business customers.
		·	Over 500 businesses replied to our questionnaires. Of
			those who responded, 96.6% felt that their business had
			been treated fairly and 97.5% of customers felt staff were
			polite in their dealings with them and informative. Some
			98.7% of customers found the information and advice we
			provided easy to understand and 97% found their
			interaction with us helpful. 96.3% were happy with the
			speed of our responses and, of those who made enquiries
			rather than being visited, 95.4% were satisfied with the
			response. As you can imagine, as a regulator we cannot
			always tell businesses what they want to hear.
3	% Food businesses broadly compliant at first assessment/	Bromsgrove 97.2%	This focuses on food hygiene interventions and the
	inspection	(98.7% 99.1%, 97.1%, 96.4%)	number of premises where there are no significant non-
		Malvern Hills 97.2%	compliances and the food produced in such premises can
		(97.0%, 97.7%, 97%, 97.6%)	be considered safe. A very high proportion of premises in
		Redditch 96.0%	all districts are broadly compliant, indicating that the vast
		(96.7%, 97.6%, 95.1%, 96.1%)	majority of food businesses are well run. There is a slight
		Worcester City 98.0%	fall in all areas this year but this is not at a level that would
		(98.0%, 98.6%, 98.2%, 96.4%)	indicate problems. Food allergens have grown in
		Wychavon 97.4%	importance in recent years and knowledge/ compliance
		(97.8%, 98%, 99.1%, 97%)	has been included in more detail as part of the
		Wyre Forest 97.8%	assessment. Not all of the premises are visited every year,
		(97.2%, 98.1%, 96.6%, 96.1%)	with the majority of premises in this group of visits having
		Worcestershire 97.3%	last been inspected in 2016/17.
4	0/ ((11)	(97.6%, 98.2%, 97.4%, 96.8%)	
4	% of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1st April each	Bromsgrove 3.6% (17)	Food premises scoring 2 or below on the Food Hygiene
	year	(1.3%, 0.9%, 2.9%, 3.6%)	Rating System are deemed to be at risk of not producing
		Malvern Hills 2.8% (13)	safe food and are subject to further intervention until such
		(3.0%, 2.3%, 3%, 2.4%)	time as they meet requirements or face formal action.
		Redditch 5.1% (16)	Some of these increases may be down to issues with
		(3.3%, 2.4%, 4.9%, 3.9%)	allergen awareness, which will have been rectified as part
		Worcester City 2.2% (11)	of the visit process, and the good news is overall numbers
		(2.0%, 1.4%, 1.8%, 3.6%)	remain low.
		Wychavon 3.0% (19)	There has been a slight increase this year with one or two
		(2.2%, 2%, 0.8%, 2.3%)	requiring closure. The local press are interested in low

		Wyre Forest 2.4% (11) (2.8%, 1.9%, 3.4%, 3.9%) Worcestershire 2.7% (87) (2.4%, 2.4%, 2.6%, 3.2%)	scoring food businesses and feature this work quite regularly. It encourages the businesses to sort themselves out and, by the time the story is in the public domain we are able to tell the public of how well the business has responded and that things are much improved.
5	% of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days of receipt of a complete application	91.4% (87.7%)	This was a new measure for 2017/18 and looks at how quickly driver licenses are renewed. This is one of the licensing processes where generally no additional paperwork is required before someone is re-licensed so generally this is one where the WRS team is in most control over timescales. There was a slight improvement on the baseline from last year. This was difficult as the majority of Wyre Forest driver renewals had to be done between January and March, creating an additional burden of volume for the team. This is a result of the renewals historically being done at this time. This glut of work will not hit us again for 3 more years and all new WFDC licenses are spread through the year for renewal.
6	% of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service	A4 = 2.8% BDC	From 1578 vehicles operating in the County and based on vehicle stop checks and failures at garage inspections; some 44 vehicles were found to be defective whilst in service. This is higher than in the previous two years and up from the 11 identified in 2015/16. This shows that enforcement and improved communication between inspecting garages are yielding what is needed and this level offers a more realistic indication of the scale of the issue. District percentage figures are based on the numbers of vehicles registered in that district on 31st March 2019.
7	% of service requests where customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future	59.0% (72.5%, 73.8%, 76.8%, 74.2%)	This focuses on non-business customers. It is a specific question asked to members of the public in the questionnaire to test if the information and support provided to them by WRS is likely to help them deal with their own problems in the future. The measure is down compared to previous years, which is reflective of the poor score for wider customer satisfaction this year. Officers have noted increasing expectations of what can be

			achieve for customers so this too has almost certainly influenced the figure.
8	Review of register of complaints and compliments	27 complaints (25, 31, 17, 24, 47, 70) 128 compliments (138, 103, 51, 57, 36, 24)	This is our longest running performance indicator in this format, hence the long list of previous year's figures. There has been a slight increase in complaints this year (25 recorded last year), against a slightly decreased number of compliments (138 recorded last year). The biggest area for complaint remains our dealings with stray dogs. This will always create some issues as it is a very emotional situation for many people and paying to get their pet back is something that does not sit well with many people. Nuisance complaints that cannot be resolved is the another area we continue to address.
9	Staff sickness absence at public sector average or better	4.12 days per FTE (12.45, 5.95, 2.3, 3.9, 7.7, 9.5)	This is an excellent response to last year's unprecedented high and shows the service returning closer to the norm. Members will likely recall that the source of the majority of this was long term sickness and this was actively being tackled by managers. Whilst an aging service is likely to have a slightly higher rate of sickness due to natural causes, managers will continue to work to bring figures back to normal.
10	% of staff who are satisfied with working for WRS	88% (NB: Annual figures for 2017/18 and before, 80%, 85%, 77%, 82%)	Members will note that last year a different approach was taken to the staff survey this year and WRS took the opportunity to use a consultancy paid for by Redditch/Bromsgrove to look at what the issues might be. Having begun responding to some of the issues that this survey raised, the service has returned to its normal practice survey so figures are comparable with previous years, which is based on those who scored 5/10 or better for the question in the staff survey which asked, are you satisfied with working with WRS. A number of areas have been highlighted by other aspects of the survey. Staff still have significant concerns at the level of service offered due to resourcing constraints. They have also highlighted some of the pressures being felt with officers trying to balance public expectation with what we can deliver with the current finances available. Whilst officers understand the

			need to pursue income generation and other strategies, there were a number of expressions indicating they were very stretched with what was expected. Managers will review the data more widely and look at what can be done.
11	% of licensed businesses subject to allegations of not upholding the 4 licensing objectives	Bromsgrove 8.7% (6.73%, 3.8%, 7.9%, 6.6%) Malvern Hills 4.8% (4.94%, 3.6%, 3%, 3.3%) Redditch 7.1% (8.65%, 2.7%, 8.1%, 10%) Worcester City 8.1% (8.19%, 5.8, 9.4%, 8.6%) Wychavon 4.0% (4.97%, 4.0, 5.5%, 3.6%) Wyre Forest 7.0% (8.29%, 5.8, 9.4%, 7%) Worcestershire 6.4% (6.78%, 4.4%, 6.9%, 7%)	Linked to the Crime & Disorder agenda and introduced following discussions with elected members, this measure is now in its fifth year. It still shows that generally premises across the County are well run and controlled by their operators. Looking at the figures over 5 years, the ones for 2016/17 stand out even more as a blip in terms of improved performance and the following 2 years show a return to a pattern similar to the two years prior to this dip. Complaints about premises generally relate to minor issues, mainly to do with noise. Many pubs are trying to diversify, offering music and other entertainment, which is within their license conditions, but sometimes this is not welcomed by some living nearby. Simple precautions can result in resolution of most of these issues.
12	Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population	Bromsgrove 2.7 (2.82, 3.0, 2.7, 3.1) Malvern Hills 2.2 (2.39, 3.0, 2.3, 3.9) Redditch 3.2 (3.61, 4.1, 3.7, 3.5) Worcester City 3.2 (3.13, 4.2, 4.0, 2.9) Wychavon 2.1 (2.46, 2.7, 2.6, 2.5) Wyre Forest 2.6 (3.23, 3.4, 3.0, 3.0) Worcestershire 2.7 (2.93, 3.4, 3.1, 3.8)	We continue to report the County average and this is the fifth year we are able to report data by individual districts. Overall, 2018/19 looks like it was a quieter year for noise complaints than some. This would marry up with the late summer dip in numbers we saw last year and the fact that numbers remained low for much of the autumn and winter. Although, as we have said previously, the complexity of the issues that the team does deal with appears to have increased and the tolerance of noise in some quarters is reduced. Where we can resolve domestic noise issues this is generally achieved through mediation between the parties concerned. 1570 noise complaints were investigated 2018/19, some 169 fewer that the previous year. 1020 related to domestic issues, some 65% of the total.

13	Total Income	13.3% Note: £401,848 as a % of £3.025M	This is an impressive figure. The service will continue to pursue this strategy but the difficulties associated with capacity for both income generation and delivering statutory regulation remains.
14	Cost of regulatory services per head of population.	Based on outrun cost of £2.961M against the current population estimate of 583,100 the service cost is: £5.08 per head	This is the amount spent by the partners following the off- setting of cost with income, then divided by the most recent mid-year estimate offered on the County Council's website. It is difficult to benchmark this figure as WRS functions are not all of those reported in the relevant part of the RO return to the MHCLG.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Strong management of performance is vital for the success of this service, ensuring that customers are satisfied and partners are reassured by the cost effective delivery of the service on their behalf. Whilst everyone must accept responsibility for managing performance, the WRS management team is committed to driving performance forward so that a high standard of service delivery can be maintained.

Management team meetings are used to review performance against the service plan and to highlight any issues of concern. Senior practitioners (first line managers) are invited to attend these meetings to ensure a two way flow of information between management and staff. This arrangement was introduced at the behest of senior practitioners and is working well. Teams have their own detailed plans that sit below the service plan signed off by Joint Board. Progress against this is monitored by Team Managers and Senior Practitioners.

The Management team also looks to the strategic direction of the service and ensures that the operational and financial resources available to partners are used in the most efficient manner to achieve both their individual strategic aims together with WRS priorities.

Continued refinement of our IT platform ensures our ability to report to Joint Board on our performance measures remains accurate. There is still work to do to use the system more effectively, but Uniform is now operating well across all functions.

There are a wide range of bodies to which the service must report data (e.g. Food Standards Agency, Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Health and Safety Executive, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Gambling Commission etc.). All statutory reports are submitted so as to ensure that WRS

continues to meet its partner's statutory obligations. It was hoped that the central bodies would accept a single data return for all partners but it now appears that all Departments with the exception of the Health and Safety Executive continue to require individual returns for each partner. WRS provides these as necessary.

A short summary of activity data is included at Appendix 5 to avoid duplication with the wider and more detailed set of activity data that is provided in the final Activity Data Report for 2018/19, which members will receive at the same meeting where this Annual Report is presented.

Internal Audits

An Internal Audit of the way in which service complaints were dealt with was undertaken. Generally audit were content with the way things were handled, making a small number of recommendations about better centralisation of records and for the formal recording of sign-off by the Head of Service rather than the current less formal arrangement.

SERVICE DELIVERY HIGHLIGHTS

There have been a number of highlights throughout the year to showcase the work of our teams and illustrate the breadth of their responsibilities.

Community Environmental Health Team

Nuisance

The team investigated 2,369 nuisance complaints in 2018/19 covering light, noise, odour and smoke. Two thirds of these related to noise nuisance which places the greatest demand on the service. Amongst these nuisance investigations were a number of challenging service requests requiring complex investigations.

The team are very skilful in resolving these issues informally, meaning that of all these cases, only 12 Abatement Notices were required.

Members often receive requests for assistance from constituents where their neighbours or nearby businesses are causing them a nuisance. In response to a request from Members, the team produced a special edition of the Members' Eye Bulletin aimed at helping members to understand the legal basis for their respective local authority's activities in relation to statutory nuisance and explaining where we have to draw the line in relation to our investigative activities. This was distributed to all Members across the County.

Food Hygiene

This year, a total of 1,514 interventions were undertaken at food premises across the County. A high proportion of these were found to be broadly compliant, indicating that the vast majority of food businesses are well run. At the year end, the proportion of businesses included in the FHRS found to be broadly compliant was 97.3%.

2.7% of food businesses across the county do however have a score of 2 or below (out of five) on the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. Such businesses are deemed to be at risk of not producing safe food so are subject to further intervention until such time as they meet requirements or face formal action.

Whilst the majority of businesses are supported to achieve compliance, formal action has been taken in respect of a number of premises and those cases that have come to court are included in the table above. In addition 23 Hygiene Improvement Notices were served due to conditions which put public health at risk.

Healthy Food Choices

We continue to promote our very own food scheme which aims to contribute to health improvements in local communities and raises the profile of participating businesses. The scheme is linked to the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, so only those businesses that have achieved a level 4 or 5 are eligible, further promoting the highest hygiene standards in food businesses. It also provides an income stream which is re-invested in the service.

Working in partnership with the LEP

WRS has been recognised by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills as a positive, innovative and pioneering service which is leading in work to reduce regulatory burdens on business. We continue to work closely with the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership to build on the initial phase of a regulatory exemplar project to deliver on the Worcestershire Food and Drink initiative. Worcestershire has some superb locally produced food and drink, made and served by the some of the most enthusiastic and passionate people in the industry. This project, in partnership with local business, aims to promote the wide variety of produce Worcestershire has to offer and boost Worcestershire's economy. Several successful events have again been held around the county and the Worcestershire Food and Drink Association website is in its final stages of development. Through this groundwork the Association now boasts some 80 business members and we are now in a transitional phase having appointed an interim Board and Chair through which the organisation will become self-governing self-supporting.

Primary Authorities

The Community Environmental Health Team continues to support five local businesses through Primary Authority Agreements through which we provide assured, paid for advice and expertise in the areas of Food Safety and Health and Safety.

Health & Safety at Work

Whilst proactive health and safety inspections no longer form part of the work programme due to service changes and Central Government's drive to reduce the regulatory burden on business, the investigation of several serious accidents arising from work activities continued to put pressure on resources. Health and safety investigations are often complex and can take months, and sometimes years, to bring to completion.

Health and Safety activity continues to be intelligence led, based on accident reports and complaints notified to us and is focused on enforcement activity. The number of complaints and enquiries received was in line with previous years as were the number of accident reports.

A successful prosecution was taken in respect of a large retailer in Wyre Forest. B &Q were fined £300,000 in relation to a banner pole that fell, hitting a member of the public on the head causing serious long term injury. The team are investigating a serious accident at company in Bromsgrove district that luckily did not result in a fatality accident. A simple caution was also issued to a large national retail chain formerly operating in Redditch.

Serious Crime

WRS has forged close links with partner organisations through the North and South Worcestershire Serious Organised Crime Joint Action Groups and the various Multi Agency Targeted Enforcement Strategy Groups which are committed to sharing intelligence and carrying out joint operations to both tackle and disrupt serious crime in Worcestershire. WRS have contributed to several such operations targeted at Food Businesses, Car Washes, Licensed Premises and Nail Bars with colleagues from West Mercia Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Immigration, Border Force, HMRC, Local Authority Housing and the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority. This work will continue in the forthcoming financial year.

Technical Services Team

Environmental Permitting

Local authorities are required to permit certain industrial processes which require payment of an annual fee by the affected companies for compliance inspections. WRS works hard to reduce the regulatory burden on businesses by advising and assisting the operators in compliance and coming out of the regulatory regime. Generally compliance remains high within regulated industry sectors and WRS have completed all scheduled inspections and all permits are up to date and appropriate for the industries regulated in Worcestershire and for Gloucester City who pay WRS to undertake this function on their behalf.

Primary Authority Relationships

The regular inspection and the enforcement work described above is generally well received by the wider business community and this was confirmed by the commencement of two Primary Authority Contracts in this regulatory area, where WRS provide assured advice for a fee to cover officer time. The contracts are with CEMEX who operate cement batching and road stone coating processes across the country in most local authority areas; and Wienerberger UK who are a multinational company with around a dozen sites in the UK producing bricks and tiles. These contracts were the first to be agreed in this area of local authority regulation. The work has been beneficial to the businesses concerned with the advice provided and assistance with inconsistent regulatory enforcement elsewhere.

Local Air Quality Management

WRS have continued to undertake all the statutory reporting on behalf of the six Worcestershire Districts. In Wychavon, concerning the newly declared Worcester Road, Wychbold AQMA work has been ongoing to quantify the required improvement and identify the source of poor air quality. Working with Wychavon DC, a steering group is being formed who will assist in development of an air quality action plan.

In Worcester City WRS facilitated the operation of a Task & Finish Group for Air Quality Measures. The group existed between December 2017 and September 2018 considering the possibilities of introducing six measures that could be employed in the City to tackle air pollution. The group was successful in assisting members to understand the issues of concern and the enormity of task in implementing the measures discussed. The results of the group formed the basis of a revised Air Quality Action Plan with tasks allocated to various departments of the City Council and WRS.

Dog Warden Service

As well as providing the dog warden service for Worcestershire, the Dog Wardens and supporting staff (such as Duty Officers and Management) have successfully contributed to the income generation of the service in the provision of a dog warden service to Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucester City Council, Tewkesbury Borough Council and provided ancillary services relating to dogs to a number of organisations, making it the most successful year to date financially. The focus has been on providing services that other organisations struggle with, such as long term boarding of dogs with enhanced environments (working with kennelling contractors), assisting with abandoned dogs and other animals in private properties. 67 dogs came from one organisation during 2018/19 with most of the dogs being boarded for a number of months each. It wasn't just dogs either, in the past we had 12 cockatiels to rehome and this year we have assisted organisations with cats, two were rehomed and we temporarily boarded another two.

Licensing

The main highlight of last year was the introduction of new regulations for the licensing of certain activities involving animals. This was a major overhaul of relevant legislation which had in reality become not fit for purpose. Each District Council was responsible for functions in relation to the licensing and regulation of various animal-related activities namely Animal Boarding, Dog Breeding, Pet Shops and Riding Establishments. These licensing regimes were amalgamated into a single licence type with each aspect becoming a specific activity named on the "Animal Activity Licence".

The new regime is designed to bring these activities into the 21st century and reflects the Government's and the public's concerns to ensure that animal welfare is paramount in the operation of these businesses. The new regulations were made under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, which is designed with the RSPCA's concept of the 5 freedoms at its heart. Freedom from hunger and thirst, Freedom from discomfort, Freedom from pain, injury or disease, Freedom to express normal behaviour and Freedom from fear and distress.

Under these new regulations the existing licensing schemes for animal boarding establishments, pet shops, riding establishments and dog breeders were repealed and replaced by a new single licensing scheme which regulates all of these activities and also incorporate the licensing of those who train or exhibit performing animals.

The description of these functions has changed and the new regulations cover more activities than the previous legislation. The new categories are:

- Selling animals as pets (not just through pet shops,)
- Providing for or arranging for the provision of boarding for cats or dogs (includes kennels or catteries, home boarding for dogs and day care for dogs).
- Hiring out horses
- Dog breeding
- Keeping or training animals for exhibition.

This change is probably the biggest legislative change in licensing since the introduction of the Licensing Act in 2003 and the Gambling Act in 2005; it has been a wholesale change and Officers were involved in developing not only appropriate in-house processes to incorporate a risk and star rating program but also webpage development including advice and guidance for all prospective applicants and for current licence holders that were affected. Across the county the change has affected at least 300 licence holders whose businesses are now subject to programmed and additional ad-hoc inspections depending on a risk based star rating system.

In a wider context other Local Authorities were struggling with this change and looked to us as development leaders to not only share our knowledge and expertise but also our written in-house guidance documents which took licence holders and prospective applicants through the new processes. In addition to this we have received feedback from our own licence holders which has been very positive throughout praising our officers for being knowledgeable, helpful and exceptionally professional.

Skills and Knowledge

We continue to support our officers as they develop skills and knowledge that staff in smaller authorities cannot sustain. As part of our continued development in our staff two of our newest Technical Licensing Officers have recently been awarded the Professional Licensing Practitioners Qualification (PLPQ), this training covered subject areas of The Licensing Act 2003 (alcohol and licensable activities), The Gambling Act 2005 (betting premises, small lotteries and various permits for gaming machines), Taxis (Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing), Sex Establishments, Street Trading and Scrap Metal Dealers. Looking forward both of these Officers are already enrolled onto their next set of training "Animal Activity Licensing" which is arranged for the beginning of July. The course is provided by the Borough of London and the Pet Industry Federation and encompasses a whole week of training/working with animals with four 2000 word essays and 100 multiple choice questions on animal welfare - which they have to pass to enable them to gain the qualification.

This continued development in staff has led WRS to sustain important roles in regional liaison forums and spreading our influence more widely. One of our officers continues to Chair the influential Neighbouring Authorities Working Group for licensing (NAWG) and represents the West Midlands Region at Local Government Association Licensing Policy Forum. Our Licensing Manager worked with DEFRA recently on the Air Quality Action Group representing the District Councils' Network on the identification of taxis and private hire vehicles entering charging CAZ which came into force from the 1st May 2019. All of the good work above means that WRS officers continue to be able to influence decision makers in Government on behalf of the profession and local government in general.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Budget 2018/19

Monthly financial monitoring reports are provided to managers and finances are regularly considered by officers from the partners ahead of each Joint Board meeting. Bromsgrove DC operates a robust ordering and authorisation process to ensure the transparency and accuracy of costing. Good management of costs, income generation and the management of vacancies led the service being able to return £63,000 to partners, 2.1% of overall budget. This was achieved mainly due to the level of income generation during the year.

The draft outrun budget for 2018/19 is included as Appendix 3, along with the proposed budget for 2019/20 onwards at Appendix 4. The outrun position is subject to final audit, although the budget has now reduced so far that this is no longer a statutory requirement for specific audit of the WRS accounts. Hence, this will be done as part of the overall audit of Bromsgrove District Council's accounts. Whilst the operating assumption remains a standstill budget for 2019/20 onwards with increasing income targets set to balance the budget, the service is aware that some partners are likely to ask the service to consider some savings from 2020/21 onwards. This may broaden out if, as some believe, the Government's funding review of local government results in the balance of funding moving more towards higher tier authorities in the remaining two-tier areas.

The income targets during the forthcoming period remain stretching but achievable and they remain uppermost in the minds of the management team. The further loss of staff capacity, which is now the only source of savings available will make these targets significantly harder to achieve. The service has a reserve of £173k from the departure of the County Council from the partnership so partners should not be concerned that problems with income generation would create an immediate problem. The reserve provides a cushion and time to consider alternative approaches if necessary.

Increasing income generation

WRS continues to deliver on funding from the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership in developing the fledgling Worcestershire Food and Drink Association. This project, in partnership with local business, aims to promote the wide variety of produce Worcestershire has to offer and boost Worcestershire's economy. Several successful events have been held around the county and the Worcestershire Food and Drink Association website is in its final stages of development. Through this groundwork the Association now boasts more than fifty business members and we are about to enter a transitional phase before the organisation becomes self-supporting during 2019/20.

In terms of commercial contract work, the largest income generation area was the Dog Warden Service provision for Cheltenham, Tewkesbury and Gloucester City Councils. This was helped by the extension of the service provided to other organisations including Social Services and Housing Associations. This has successfully utilised the existing Dog Wardens and contractors to make better use of resources and benefit from economies of scale. The next two significant income generators were contaminated land advice to planners and service requesters in Gloucester City, South Gloucestershire and North Warwickshire Council areas and Air Quality/

Planning consultation support in Tewkesbury. We also provided Industrial permitting inspections for Gloucester City, which made up the remainder. There are a number of significant points concerning the work this year. The team has managed to maintain high standards of service for new clients, existing clients and the Partner Authorities; with the volume of commercial work has increased. This has enabled income to be either reinvested where required or contribute to monies provided back to Partners at the end of the year.

One contract with a blue light service was not renewed which will create a difficult financial hole to fill.

WORKFORCE PLANNNG AND HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The WRS structure has now been in place since October 2015 with Simon Wilkes as the Head of Service with a team of four Managers looking after different areas of the service. David Mellors as Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager covering all of the responsibilities of his Community Environmental Health team, (Food Safety, Health and Safety and Statutory Nuisance, with some other minor areas) and the Trading Standards remit (Weights and Measures, Food and Agricultural Standards, Product Safety, Fair Trading, Animal Health) on a contractual basis since the County's departure from the partnership in 2016. Mark Cox continues to head up the Technical Services Team covering Technical Pollution (managing Planning, IPPC, Contaminated Land, Air Quality), Dog Wardens and Pest Control. Susan Garratt also continues in the role of Licensing and Support Services Team Manager. In 2016, Kiran Lahel was appointed as the new Business and Relationship Manager looking after partnerships, the intelligence team and more recently the first contact team of Duty Officers.

Staff turnover remains low, although occasionally a member of staff will decide to move onto pastures new. This has allowed us to recruit new but experienced staff from either other backgrounds to suit our income generation work or from other local authorities. All of the newcomers have added value to what is being delivered. At the 1st April 2019, the total staff establishment was around 68 FTE, although some of this capacity is on fixed term contract.

All staff participated in the Personal Development Review (PDR) process last year and this has been fed into a personal training plan for each officer and an overall training plan for the service. The latter allows us to look at opportunities for running training in-house (bringing the trainer to us) where there is sufficient need, which is significantly more cost effective than going to external providers.

WRS Officers receive two performance reviews per annum through the service's formal PDR system. The annual detailed review and 6-monthly progress check is designed to identify development needs and discuss how each person contributes more widely to the service's key strategic priorities and service delivery. All PDR reports are countersigned by the next level of management to ensure consistency, openness and transparency and ensure that nothing is missed.

Staff Survey

After utilising Bromsgrove's consultant last year, WRS returned to its normal method of staff survey as is indicated in the performance table above. 41 0f our 68 staff members replied and the proportion satisfied with working for WRS by our measure is 88%. We have several new members of staff whose replies spoke very positively about their initial experiences of working for WRS which is heartening. The key areas identified in the survey, which managers will try to address are:

- Improving support during periods of change,
- Communications within the service, especially the relationship between teams,
- Providing support to officers to help them cope with their high workloads,

Staff Sickness

During 2017/18 staff sickness reached 12.45 days per FTE, which is by far the highest level in the past 5 years and managers believe a record overall for the service. Work was done by mangers to understand who was creating the problem and steps were taken to deal with one or two through the non-attendance process whilst others with genuine medical issues were provided with additional support. This has resulted in a fall back to more normal levels at 4.12 days per FTE. Managers will continue to apply some pressure to continue improvement but with an aging workforce, one has to accept there will be some level of illness associated with the aging process.

ACCOMMODATION

WRS remains located at Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster with the contract up for renewal on the 23rd March 2020. The use of flexible and mobile working is generally now the norm, with staff frequently using home as their start and finish point for work in the field. Officers will come into the office two or three days per week to liaise with managers and colleagues or for meetings, and on the other days they work flexibly. The touch down points retained in each of the councils have provided an excellent venue for licensing surgeries and these have been welcomed by the taxi trade in particular. This move has also enabled staff to strike a better work/life balance which is essential for good morale.

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION (SERVICE DELIVERY)

Further training has been provided to both managerial and operational staff on the components of an intelligence model, the process of developing raw information into finished intelligence (the intelligence cycle) and how to use intelligence during decision making processes. Aspects of this training were previously rolled out to colleagues across the region, and are still offered by the service as an income generating activity. The Intelligence Unit within the service has helped to both direct the work of the service and to provide information for managers and members on outputs. This will continue to develop during the coming years, even following the departure of Trading Standards from the partnership,

Whilst WRS has traditionally undertaken strategic tasking in the form of business planning, the tasking and coordination process was not routinely employed at a tactical level until 2016. Each operational team now has a tactical tasking group that convenes to review on-going enforcement activity, consider proposals for new 'project based' work and assess the level of available resource. This ensures a range of factors are considered during decision making processes including the level of risk, our priorities and available intelligence. This change of thinking is of critical importance as the service places a greater emphasis on taking 'evidence based decisions' and continues towards an intelligence led approach. In addition to tasking, a service wide tactical assessment is now produced on a six monthly basis and statistical bulletins on a quarterly basis. Other intelligence products have also been commissioned including 'problem profiles' on food hygiene standards and noise pollution and dog welfare.

RISK MANAGEMENT

WRS recognises that the development of policy, delivery of service priorities and the management of its services for six partners attract risk. In reviewing its service risks and the effects of management strategies and policies WRS seeks to:

- Identify, assess and manage risk
- Safeguard the services assets and equipment
- Focus on the delivery of its service to its customers

The Service aims to ensure that Risk Management becomes a natural component of its management process and that when and where appropriate; risks are avoided, reduced, transferred or retained. As part of these arrangements, a WRS risk register has been developed that can be integrated with the partners individual risk registers. This register will be maintained and reviewed periodically to assess current risks and identify forthcoming priorities. The service's Business Continuity Plan is going to be reviewed over the coming 12 months with the support of colleagues in North Worcestershire Emergency Planning. The restructured document should bring the service in line with the approach taken across other partner areas. The current risk register appears as Appendix 2.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

WRS is committed to equality of opportunity and respect for diversity. The service links in with the host Authority's adopted Equality Standard for Local Government as a framework to help embed equality and diversity into everyday aspects of its work.

THE NEXT STEPS

As we head into the next period the service's principle challenge remains maintaining a service delivery model that meets all our partner's requirements as well as creating sufficient efficiency to increase the income derived budget contribution. The development of IT based solutions to promote self-help/ channel shift and increasing the ability of our in-house Duty Officers to resolve problems at first point of contact are key threads in our proposals for increasing efficiency and delivering the service at lower cost. However, the law of diminishing marginal returns does mean that efficiencies will only take us so far in dealing with the inflationary pressures on the service. We will continue to face an ever changing environment and communications with staff will remain a key element of strategy for maintaining performance, whilst keeping them informed of developments and involving them in the change process. Key developments going forward will include:

- Continued delivery of the WRS Business Plan and our annual operational service plans
- Maintaining existing income streams and looking at other ways of generating income for the service,
- Following our philosophy of continuous improvement, continuing to review operations to improve marginal efficiencies,
- Continuing the process of channel shift by increasing the customer's ability to use self-help, do transactions on-line and monitor progress of work.
- Continue to work closely with County Council Trading Standards colleagues and other partner agencies by maintaining links that help to support both WRS and other services to the benefit of local people.

Appendix 1: STRUCTURE at 1st April 2018

Head of Regulatory Services Simon Wilkes 01562-738088

Team Manager Community EH and Trading Standards Manager David Mellors 01562-738060 Technical Services Manager Mark Cox 01562-738023 Licensing and Support Services Manager Susan Garratt 01562-738037

Business & Relationship Manager Kiran Lahel 01562-738067

Community Environmental Health Functions

- Food (Safety)
- Health and Safety at work
- Infectious Diseases
- Food Poisoning
- Accident Investigation
- Street Trading
- Private Water Supplies
- Nuisances
- Drainage, Etc
- Public Burials/Exhumations
- Health and Wellbeing
- Legal Admin

<u>Trading Standards & Animal</u> <u>Health</u>

- Metrology
- Food (Labelling & Composition)
- Fair Trading
- Product Safety
- Underage Sales
- Doorstep Crime
- Internet Crime
- Counterfeiting and Scams
- Rogue Trading
- Consumer Advice
- Redress Facilitation
- Civil Enforcement
- Animal Health and Welfare
- Notifiable Animal Disease responses
- Animal By-Products
- Environmental Packaging & Labelling
- TS related work in Home Authority/ Primary Authority/ Manufacturers & Importers
- Petroleum and Explosives licensing enforcement

Technical Services functions

- Dog Warden Service
- Domestic Pest Control
- Contaminated Land
- Air Quality
- Planning Consultations
- Environmental Permitting
- IT Support & Data Control
- Service First Contacts

Licensing and Support functions

All Licensing Functions including licensing enforcement activities relating to:

- Taxi & PH trades.
- Alcohol Sales and associated regulated activities
- Late-night Refreshment
- Gambling Premises
- Animal-related activities including zoos
- Dangerous Wild Animals
- Street Trading
- Street collections
- House to House collections
- Various service registrations

And more

Support functions including

- Administrative Support
- Finance
- Public Information/Registers

Support for HoS and Team Managers in developing business cases for clients in relation to delivering services for others and managing existing relationships plus management of:

Intelligence Unit

- Performance information reporting
- Development of Strategic and Tactical Assessments
- Development of problem and target profiles
- Liaison with other intelligence functions in partner agencies

Appendix 2 – WRS Risk Register

			Current Position		n		
Risk Description	Consequences	When is this likely to happen	Likelihood	Impact	Matrix RAG Status	Control measures	
Loss of Data through IT failures	Disruption to Service Provision. Inability to produce records and data.	On-going	Low	High	Green	Wyre Forest ICT has effective processes and business continuity plans in place. WFDC upgraded VMWare	
Issues with the WRS database system	Impact on work planning. Self-help may not enable savings required	On-going	Low	High	Green	Initial implementation is completed. Further development of the system will be treated as business as usual, with priority going to public access and self-help/self-service to continue the channel shift process. Service website remains key access point. Tested disaster recovery of our Uniform back up and fail over to the business continuity server EDRMS upgrade completed proposed 2018	
Effective and efficient Business Continuity arrangements in place	Disruption to service if e.g. Major Power failures or other reasons that access to Wyre Forest House is not possible.	On-going	Very Low	Medium	Green	Staff are equipped for mobile/home working. Touchdown stations available in partner council locations. Working from WFDC depot successfully tested over Christmas period.	
Maintain our capacity to achieve service delivery	Disruption to service e.g. Major staff sickness (e.g. flu pandemic) or Unable to recruit or retain suitably qualified staff.	On-going	Low	Medium	Amber	In such event, service priorities to be managed and partners informed of any changes to service. Consultants are available to provide short term cover and this has worked well where we have used them to cover peak demand periods. However, having taken on contracts with additional authorities the demand has increased and neighbouring authorities have lost the ability to be able to assist with technical specialisms. We are active within regional and subregional groups to share resources if required. Effective training and development processes are in place to ensure recruitment and retention of staff. There is increased training budget pressure, reduced technical knowledge in neighbouring authorities and increased importance in maintaining heightened skills for contractual obligations and commercial edge. Regular inventory and maintenance of equipment. In future budget for replace may be an issue but would be a relatively small amount for partners to share.	

Pest contractors cease operations.	Disruption to service. Negative media coverage. Increased public health risks	On-going	Low	High	Green	New framework contract has 6 pest control suppliers so the loss of one allows work to be moved to the others.
Effective and efficient contract arrangement for dog control	Disruption to service if no kennels available. Negative media coverage. Increased public health risks	On-going	Low	High	Amber	Budget available to buy in use of other private sector providers in short term. Contracts tendered. The Dog Warden contracts are robust but we have one less kennel contractor but an additional three District Councils that we provide the service for. Work for other Public Sector clients are restricted to one kennelling provider raising the risk this element poses.
Hosting support does not deliver necessary financial and HR support to ensure efficient management	Efficiency of management reduced; staffing issues remain unaddressed and performance suffers	On-going	Low	High	Amber	Some continuing issues around access to the financial system from Wyre Forest house, meaning managers are reliant on host finance officers for financial reporting. ICT team from WFDC and BDC continue to work to resolve the issue
One or more partners continue to be under great financial pressure and may consider alternatives to the partnership to deliver their service	Creates reputational issues for remaining partners and increases the need to manage overheads. Difficulties in delivering highly varied levels of service	On-going	Low- Medium	High	Amber	New legal agreement limits variations in contribution before partners have to move to contractual relationship. Leanness of organisation minimises overheads and focuses resource at the front line. Growth strategy should generate income to support partners in the future. Some reputational damage and perceived loss of commercial skills from the County Council withdrawing from the partnership.
Robust arrangements in place in relation to obtaining legal advice and monitoring legislative changes.	Loss of cases is costly and damages reputation.	On-going	Low	Medium	Green	Continued close working with BDC legal team and other partners who don't use BDC for advocacy. Technical and legal training days for staff. Difficulty in keeping informed of Case Law developments. Membership and attendance of Officer Technical Groups outside the County would assist.
Service provision complies with Government requirements	Adverse comments following audits e.g. FSA Intervention by Government bodies i.e. FSA, whilst highly unlikely, is damaging to reputation.	On-going	Low	High	Amber	Limited detail of what statutory minima are. LGA clearly aware of impact of budget reductions on regulation and has made it clear Government cannot expect what it had previously. Fewer interventions/ audits by government. Service has developed systems that follow the principles of the requirements of bodies like FSA so can show some level of compliance. WRS principle of moving away from rigid inspection programme of Food Standards Code (as approved by WRS Joint Board) to intelligence led interventions is compliant with Food Safety Act albeit not as FSA would be able to sanction. Environmental reporting for Local Air Quality Management, Pollution Prevention and Control and Private Water Supply Inspections to Defra and DWI have received positive

						responses with no issues of concern raised.
Failure to deliver external contract work at the level expected by the business or local authority with whom we have the contract	Damage to reputation, loss of future income streams, financial impact of paying damages	On-going	Low	High	Green	Ensure contract negotiations are clear on performance criteria and these are clearly recorded in the final documentation. Monthly reviews against performance criteria. Select staff to ensure competence of those undertaking work outside Worcestershire. Maintain strong links with the customer's monitoring staff. Intervene early with corrective action

Appendix 3: Detailed out-turn for Regulatory Services 2018/19

	£'000	£'000	£'000
Salary	2,534	2,394	-140
Agency Staff	0	89	89
Employee Insurance	40	40	-0
	2,574	2,523	-51
Rent / Hire of Premise	54	53	-1
Cleaning	1	1	-0
Utilities	0	0	0
- -	55	54	-1
Vehicle Hire	13	1	-12
Vehicle Fuel	8	4	-4
Road Fund Tax	1	1	-0
Vehicle Insurance	5	5	0
Vehicle Maintenance	3	2	-1
Car Allowances	87	70	-17
- -	116	83	-34

Furniture & Equipment	30	49	20
	2	9	7
Clothes, uniforms and laundry Printing & Photocopying Postage ICT	17 11 40	21 13 30	4 2 -10
Telephones Training & Seminars Insurance Third Party Payments Support Service Recharges	21 24 5 100	21 22 5 100	-0 -2 0
ICT Hosting	293	44 314	<u>0</u> 21
5		4-4	
Dog Warden	145	154	9
Dog Warden Pest Control Taxi / Alcoh & Other Licensing	145 47 65	154 56 101	9 9 36
Pest Control	47	56	9

Advertising, Publicity and Promotion	6	4	-1
-	295	390	95
Income Training Courses / Bereavement / Works in Default / Sewer Baiting etc	-309	-402	-93
- -	-309	-402	-93
- -	3,025	2,961	-64

Appendix 4: 3-year budget	s 2019/20 to 2021/22
Account description	

Account description	Budget	Budget	Budget
	2019 / 2020	2020 / 2021	2021 / 2022
	£000's	£000's	£000's
Employees			
Monthly salaries	2,695	2,709	2,732
Training for professional qualifications	2	2	2
Medical fees (employees')	2	2	2
Employers' liability insurance	40	40	40
Employees' professional subscriptions	3	3	3
Sub-Total - Employees	2,741	2,755	2,778
Premises			
Rents	52	52	52
Room hire	2	2	2
Trade Waste	0	0	0
Sub-Total - Premises	54	54	54
Transport			
Vehicle repairs/maint'ce	3	3	3
Diesel fuel	8	8	8
Licences	1	1	1
Contract hire of vehicles	4	4	4
Vehicle insurances	5	5	5
Van Lease	9	9	9
Fares & Car Parking	5	5	5
Car allowances	75	75	75
Sub-Total - Transport	110	110	110
Supplies & Service			
Equipment - purchase/maintenance/rental	23	23	23

9	9	9
2	2	2
23	23	23
5	5	5
18	18	18
2	2	2
11	11	11
40	40	40
21	21	21
22	22	22
26	26	26
100	100	100
44	44	44
345	345	345
	2 23 5 18 2 11 40 21 22 26 100 44	2 2 23 23 5 5 18 18 2 2 11 11 40 40 21 21 22 22 26 26 100 100 44 44

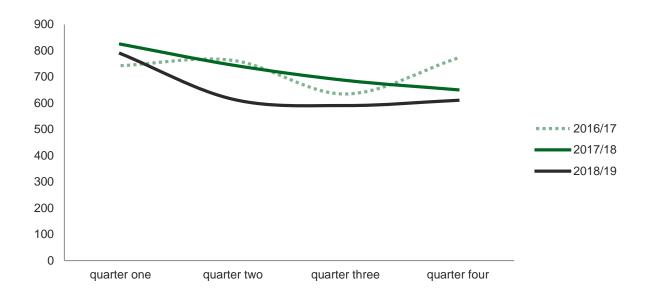
	Budget 2019 / 2020 £000's	Budget 2020 / 2021 £000's	Budget 2021 / 2022 £000's
Contractors			
Consultants / Contractors' fees/charges/SLA's	239	239	239
Advertising (general)	5	5	5
Grants and subscriptions	11	11	11
Marketing/promotion/publicity	2	2	2
Sub-Total - Contractors	257	257	257
Income			
Grants / Primary Authority / Food Training / Contaminated Land / Stray Dogs / Ad Hoc	-410	-410	-410
Sub-Total - Income	-410	-410	-410

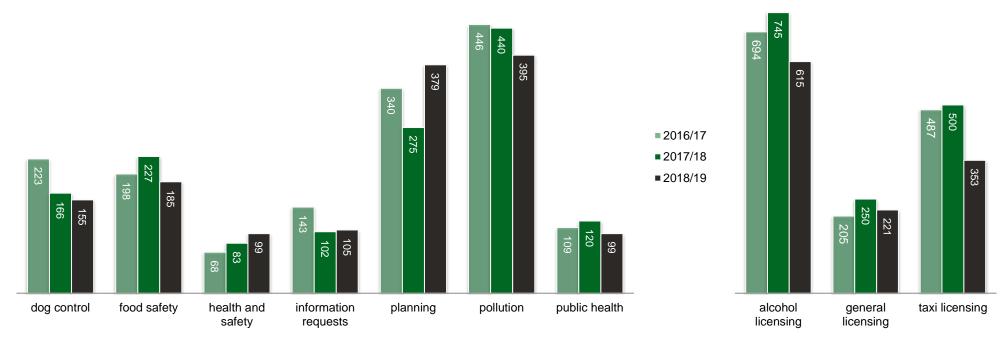
Income			
From partners for Technical Officers	<u>-79</u>	-52	-36
Sub-Total - Income	-79	-52	-36
Additional Income			
Income to be found due to unavoidable salary pressures		-41	-80
Sub-Total - Income		-41	-80
DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP BUDGET	3,017	3,017	3,017
19-20 Partner Percentages			
Bromsgrove	14.55%		
Redditch	17.53%		
Wyre Forest	15.35%		
Wychavon	23.24%		
Malvern	12.79%		
Worcs City	16.54%		
Total	100.00%		

Appendix 5: Activity Summary for individual partners



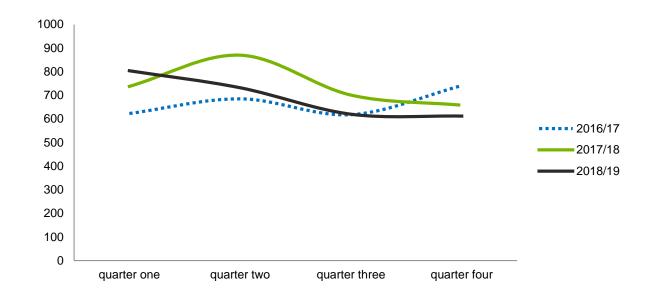
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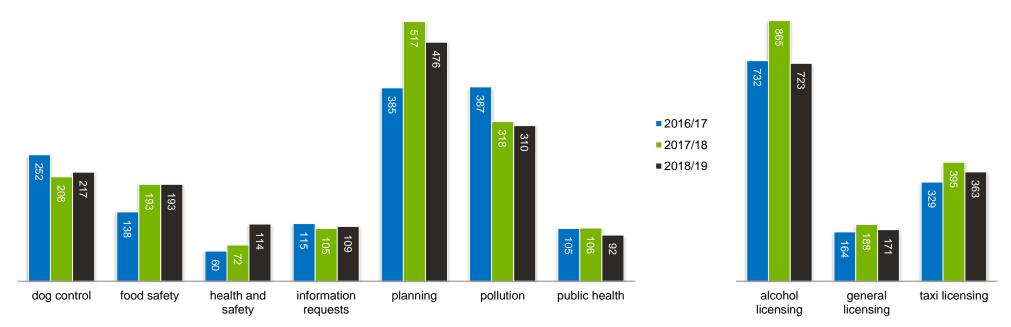






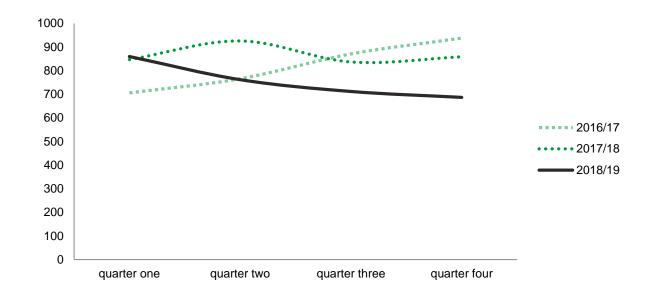
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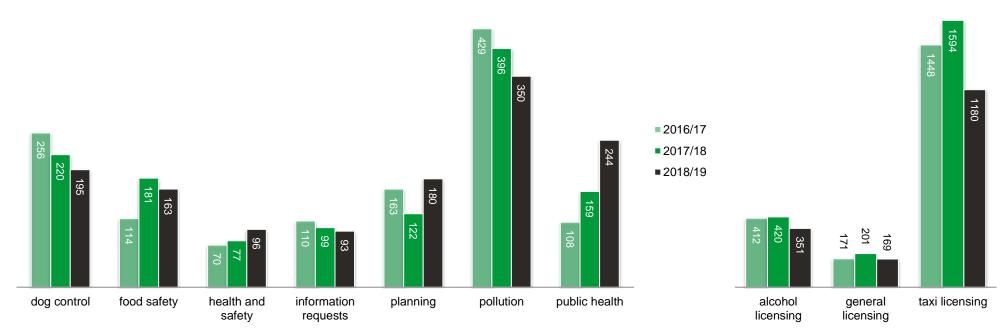






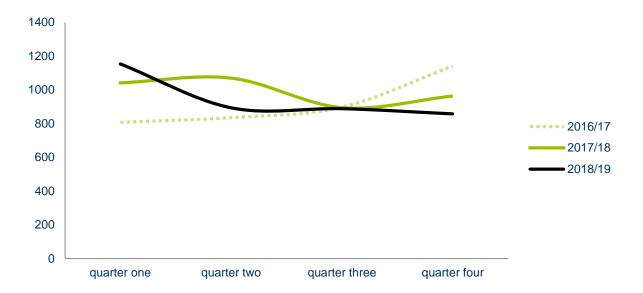
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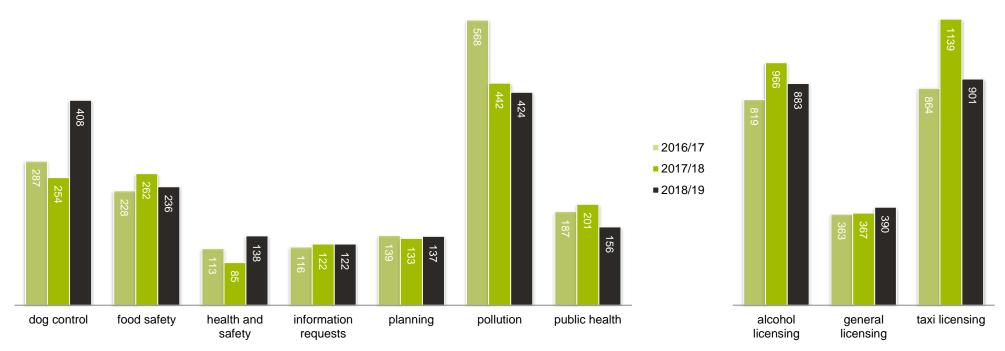






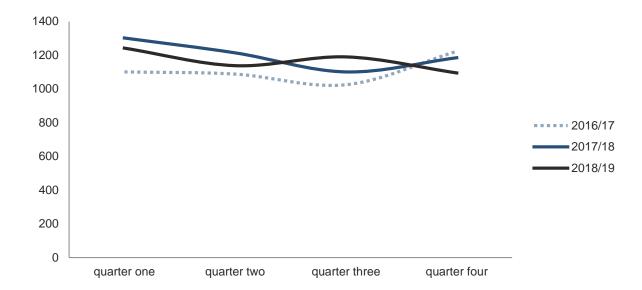
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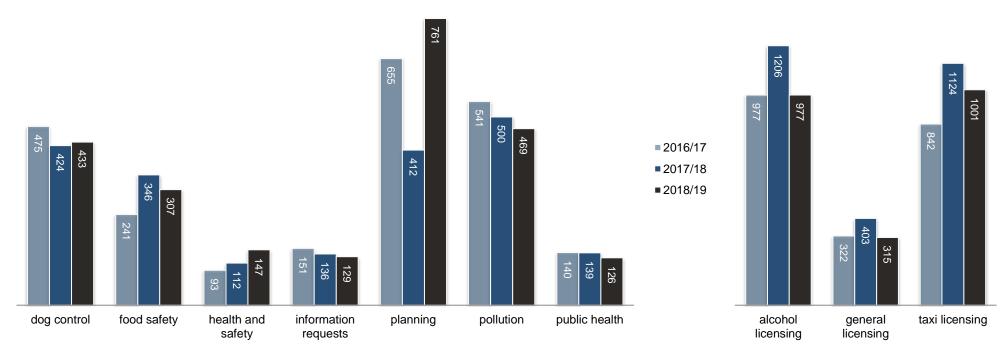






The data on this page relates to **Environmental Health** and **Licensing** complaints, enquiries, applications or notifications where the subject or enquirer was located within the district of **Wychavon**.







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**.

