

WRS Board

Date: 19th November 2020

Title: Activity and Performance Data Quarter 1 and 2 2020/21

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 and 2 but the actual data allows comparison with previous quarters and 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 address a range of issues in each partner area and more broadly across the county.

Report

Activity Data

The second quarter of 2020/21 commenced with all of us coming out of lockdown and supporting the re-opening of the economy and local businesses.

The Food Standards Agency suspended the Food Hygiene inspection programme at the beginning of lockdown in March and this continued throughout the second quarter. This explains the low number of inspections, reflecting that the service was engaging mainly with new entrants to the sector or those wanting re-rating. Clearly any allegations of serious misconduct were also followed up and food service requests did show an increase through the quarter.

On the Health and Safety at Work front, although accident numbers remained relatively low, there was an increase in complaints and enquiries. With fewer people in workplaces, it seems reasonable to assume that some jobs would be less pressured so accidents less likely but the focus of Covid controls in the workplace is driven by health and safety, which may have improved the focus on wider health and safety culture.

Stray dog numbers continued to follow their downward trend, albeit at one point, creeping slightly above the trend line. We can only assume that with more people working from home, the chances of dogs getting out has been



lower or perhaps if people are walking their pets more regularly, the urge to stray may be reduced. Officers remain concerned that the economic difficulties that will ultimately follow from the pandemic might lead to a spike in dog abandonment as people decided that they cannot afford to feed their pets, however as yet there is no evidence of this.

Numbers of licensing complaints and enquires began to grow during quarter 2, in line with the re-opening of licensed premises and the growth in wider licensed activities. Applications also began to rise to the kind of levels one might expect. However, the service did not experience the huge rush of temporary events over the summer that it would normally experience for events, fayres and festivals. In Quarter 2 2019/20 some 589 TENs were submitted to the service from across the county. During the same period this year only 115 were received, less than 20% of what might be expected in a normal year. This helps to illustrate the impacts that the pandemic has had on this sector of the economy.

Planning application numbers rose during quarter 2, going back towards their normal trajectory as the economy re-opened. Environmental Information Requests, often associated with the planning and development process were also returning to more normal levels during this period.

As we always see during the summer months, nuisance/ pollution complaints showed their characteristic peak. Noise complaint numbers exceeded the number for the same period in the previous two years, this time by a significant proportion, 12% or more above the previous two year's equivalent periods. Public Health complaints (accumulations, nuisances, and similar,) that are dealt with under the same legislative provisions were also high at least at the same level as 2018/ 19 and above last year's number for the same period.

This was at a time when a significant number of our officers were engaged with the pandemic response, supporting the re-opening of the economy and dealing with issues of non-compliance with Covid controls. Those who managed the normal day to day activities deserve a huge amount of praise for dealing with all of these issues often referred to as "business as usual" activities at a time when things were far from normal and a huge chunk of resource was not available to ease the workload.

Performance

Quarter 2 sees a broader report of performance measures than the starting quarter. The year continues reasonably well from a customer satisfaction perspective with the non-business customer measure at 74.4% and business customers at 97.7%. Given the pressures on the service during the first six months of the year, this has to be seen as good. At the same point last year, customer satisfaction was at 73.8% and business satisfaction at 98.3%. People who felt better equipped to deal with issues is at 72.3% compared with 63% this time last year.

As we said at the last report, the broadly compliant measure for food businesses is based on relatively limited numbers of interventions, so



may be of limited value. We will continue to report this for completeness but it will be less relevant until the normal inspection routine re-starts. The Food Standards Agency has confirmed that this will not happen ahead of February 2021, and at that point they are likely to be looking to 2021/22 before anything like normal activities can be delivered. The Agency has written to Chief Executives to outline what their expectations are in the interim period and the Food Lead, along with the Community EH Manager is looking to ensure that this can be delivered. Finally, on Food, members are reminded that the broadly compliant measure is derived from what was National Indicator NI184 in the old suite of local government indicators, so any figures other than the final year end one are only ever indicative.

Processing of taxi driver license renewals remains good with a county-wide average of 97.4% done within 5 working days. This is much better than the same time last year, when the figure was 78.5% but we have to accept that demand has probably been lower as we are arranging for some to defer their renewals if they are happy to take vehicles off the road temporarily. We have also moved processes to online which has increased efficiency and communication with applicants.

We have not reported indicator 6 on vehicles found defective in service this period as the majority of the council garages that feed much of this data have only recently re-opened post Covid. A small number of vehicle operators have also deferred renewal of some cars, so fewer vehicles are on the road looking for business. Our enforcement resource is currently focused on alleged non-compliance with Covid provisions, so there hasn't been capacity for stop-check activities and again, with the garages being closed we'd have had nowhere to take the vehicles to be checked. We will report the period up to December in the February Board paper.

Compliments outnumber complaints by 3:1 (24:78) and staff sickness is looking reasonably good at 0.95 days per FTE. This is better than the previous year's figure at Q1 (2.91 days per FTE.)

The rate of reported non-compliance with the 4 licensing objectives is relatively low at 4.3%, with Redditch being higher than the other 5 districts at 8.3%. This reporting excludes reports of Covid non-compliance so that the figure remains comparable with previous years. Last year, the County average at this point in the year was 4.9%, with all districts being slightly higher than they are this year, except for Redditch which was at 6.1% this time last year.

The rate of noise complaints per 1000 head of population is up at 0.94 compare to 0.85 at the same point last year, some 10.6% higher overall. This was not, however reflected everywhere, with Wychavon actually seeing a fall (0.64 down from 0.89,) and Wyre Forest showing a small decrease (0.86 down from 0.94.) Bromsgrove showed the largest increase (0.98 compared to 0.66 at the same point last year.) This may be a reflection of more people being at



home or working from home and experiencing situations they would not normally be aware of.

Income as a proportion of budget is at 4.37%. This is as expected down on previous years due to the pandemic and our usual customer based of local authorities not requiring our services at the same level. At the same point last year, just over £160,000 had come in compared with just over £130,000 this year. To maintain comparability, we have not included income for measures to combat the pandemic in the calculation.

Contact Points

Kiran Lahel, Acting Licensing and support Services Manager
01562 738067
Kiran.lahel@worcsregservices.gov.uk

Background Papers

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



Appendix 1: 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	74.6	75.4		
2. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	99.3	97.7		
3. % businesses broadly compliant at first assessment/ inspection	Annually	98.3	Bromsgrove 98.6 Malvern Hills 98.6 Redditch 97.7 Worcester City 98.3 Wychavon 99.1 Wyre Forest 98.2 Worcestershire 98.5		
4. % of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 st April each year	Annually	1.7	1.5		
5 % of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days of receipt of a complete application	6-monthly	NA	Bromsgrove 100 Malvern Hills 85.7 Redditch 97.9 Worcester City 93.9 Wychavon 97.9 Wyre Forest 100 Worcestershire 97.4	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	As Council garages closed for much of lockdown and have only recently re-opened for business, at this stage there is no meaning full data for this measure. Enforcement capacity is currently focused on Covid compliance in licensed premises so no taxi stop checks.	NA	



7	% of service requests where customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	63.2	72.3		
8	Review of register of complaints/compliments	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	6/18	24/ 78		
9	Annual staff sickness absence at public sector average or better	Quarterly NB: figure is cumulative	0.61 days per FTE	0.95 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	Bromsgrove 4.0 Malvern Hills 3.0 Redditch 8.3 Worcester City 4.5 Wychavon 3.3 Wyre Forest 4.5 Worcestershire 4.3	NA	
12	Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population	6-monthly	NA	Bromsgrove 0.98 Malvern Hills 0.84 Redditch 1.20 Worcester City 1.16 Wychavon 0.64 Wyre Forest 0.86 Worcestershire 0.94	NA	
13	Total income expressed as a % of district base revenue budget (16/17)	6-monthly	NA	4.37% (i.e. £131,901/£3,017,00)	NA	



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

