

## WRS Board

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021

### Title: Activity and Performance Data Quarters 1, 2 3 and 4 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 the final quarter of 2020/21 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 final quarter of 2020/21 featured a third lockdown, based on the same legal framework as the one in November, so not akin to lockdown 1 at the beginning of the financial year. As with previous quarters, officers dealing with Covid have had to respond to and adjust activities to accommodate a rapidly changing regulatory framework as changes to the regime can occur with little notice. This was whilst continuing to manage business as usual activity like nuisance complaints.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) suspended the 'Food Hygiene inspection' programme at the beginning of lockdown in March and this continued throughout the year. The service was, however expected to deliver on a range of activities, focused only on the highest risk businesses and, in some cases, this was done alongside Covid control visits. Numbers of interventions for the year have inevitably remained low in comparison to previous years, reflecting that the service was engaged mainly with new entrants to the sector, those wanting re-rating and those that posed the highest hygiene risk locally. All allegations of serious non-compliance have been and will continue to be followed up but thankfully these continued to be relatively few in number. As members will see from one of the other

papers at this meeting, the service is now planning how to follow the FSA's roadmap back to normal food controls.

Even with the increase in reported issues during Q3 and 4, 2020/21 was a relatively quiet year for new Health and Safety interventions. Although a proportion related to Covid outbreaks at business premises, it seems likely that the lockdown related closure of many local authority-regulated businesses may have limited the need for us to intervene. Two significant cases went to court and results were reported in the press.

Although Q4 showed an increase in dog related complaints, overall it was a quiet year for this work and the downward trend in stray dog numbers has continued. Both remain indicative of improved conduct of owners however concerns remain that the economic difficulties that will ultimately follow from the pandemic might lead to a spike in dog abandonment. Time will tell.

The Q4 lockdown led to a plateauing of license applications. The number of licensing cases reported to WRS during the year is a reduction of 21% and 40% compared to previous years. With the hospitality sector and night time economy significantly affected by COVID 19 restrictions however, this has led to a significant reduction in the volume of alcohol licensing applications; particularly temporary event notices Overall, just over half of cases dealt with by the team have been applications and registrations; with 38% of these cases relating to hackney carriage and private hire trades.

Generally, WRS receives a higher number of enquiries about licensing matters than complaints about licensed or unlicensed activity. Based on the 498 complaints received this year, 38% related to alcohol and entertainment, whilst 25% related to taxis and 18% to the animal activity regime

Quarter 4 saw planning application numbers plateau. The number of planning enquiries recorded by WRS during the year is an increase of 12% compared to 2018/19 but a reduction of 7% compared to 2019/20. Whilst there has been fluctuation in the number of enquiries, the type of cases has remained relatively consistent. Approximately 91% were consultations, whilst 52% related to contaminated land. A fifth of planning enquiries were completed, on a contractual basis, on behalf of other local authorities.

Information requests, often associated with the planning and development process also continued an upward trajectory throughout Q4, supplemented by requests for information about the Covid response.

Following the drop in Q3, Q4 saw an increase in numbers of nuisance complaints despite the cold weather. A similar pattern in domestic nuisance reporting was seen during lockdown 1, so it likely that people experienced more issues at home than they would normally as they would be at work. The number of pollution cases recorded by WRS this year is an increase of 23% and 10% compared to previous years. Approximately 43% of cases have related to domestic noise, whilst 21% have related to smoke nuisance. A significant proportion of the latter has related to domestic bonfires, with a smaller proportion relating to the burning of commercial waste. Whilst COVID-19 restrictions are a notable factor in the level of

domestic nuisance, good weather remains the major driver behind numbers overall for the year.

As we have reported previously, our business as usual services continue to be delivered against the background of the service having a significant staff commitment to the pandemic response. Your officers responding to the challenging pandemic and equally those who continue to manage and deliver the normal day to day activities on the front line deserve a huge amount of praise at a time when things are far from normal and they are continually tested beyond anything that professions have encountered in our lifetime.

### **Covid related activities**

Covid related enforcement activities continued through the quarter. EHOs embedded within the Local Outbreak Response Team remained busy tackling business outbreaks and undertaking detailed backwards contact tracing exercises in areas with high case numbers. Covid related enforcement activities continued with officers regularly undertaking pro-active out of hours work in evenings and at weekends to check on who was open or closed and how takeaway work was being managed. There was much good practice seen as most businesses tried to meet the requirements.

Covid Advisors were out daily in most parts of the county but focusing on those areas where case numbers were highest. Board members were included in the weekly email update on what was found and how this new team was dealing with the public, reminding them of what to do. On average, over 500 businesses and over 1000 members of the public have been spoken to each week by the team. Lost to follow-up, where we deal with the contact tracing of those who the national system had missed, as very busy during the early part of the quarter when case numbers were very high. Officers worked closely with district colleagues in a number of the Councils to door-knock those who did not reply to our local telephone calls. Seldom a week would go by when one or more referrals was made to the police where people appeared not to be isolating as required. Fortunately, these numbers remained relatively small throughout.

### **Performance**

The year ended reasonably well from a customer satisfaction perspective with the non-business customer measure at 74% and business customers at 98.4%. Given the demands and pressures on the service this year, this has to be seen as positive. Customer satisfaction last year was at 69.5% overall and business satisfaction at 97.4%. People who felt better equipped to deal with issues ended the year at 68.2%, above the 58.1% that it was last year.

Covid made it very difficult to run proactive taxi enforcement projects during the year and, as Council garages closed for much of lockdown and have intermittently been open for business during the year, there is

very limited data to show the proportion of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service. It may be sensible to treat this year as so unusual that this measure would tell us little about the general state of the fleet. Officers are already programming more enforcement work for 2021/22 and we will have detailed conversations with garages to ensure that all data on failed tests is supplied this year.

Compliments outnumber complaints by around 4:1 (161:42) very similar to last year. Staff sickness is down at 1.9 days per FTE. This includes additional temporary staff taken on for pandemic response. This is half the figure in the previous 12 months and is probably reflective of the ease of people working on days when they are not well enough to travel to the office but well enough to work at home. Again, this should probably be treated as an exceptional result.

Staff satisfaction was at 93.5%. another good result with 30/50 staff who responded scoring the service as 8/10 or better to work for. Further work will be done during the year to look at more detailed feedback.

The proportion of businesses licensed under the 2003 Act (alcohol and entertainment,) allegedly not uphold the 4 licensing objectives averages out across the county at 5%, with Redditch at 8.3% and Malvern Hills at 3.5%. Looking at the numbers, this year appears to be on the low average side, possibly because many premises have been closed for much of the year due to the pandemic. Many premises have, however been open for takeaway and of course at times for wider operations under Covid restrictions.

Looking at figures for the rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population, this unusual year appears to have been average to slightly above for nuisance complaints. We have said at several points in the year that noise complaints did increase, possibly because people were less aware of their environments during the day as they'd normally be away at work. It still suggests however, that overall, the environment for Worcestershire residents is good.

Total income is down slightly on last year at £405,000, meaning the measure at 13.42% is also slightly down on last year's 14.65%. given that many of our regular customers for planning work did not ask for much during the first lockdown in particular, this remains a reasonable level of performance.

The overall cost of the service, therefore, is also slightly up on last year at £5.07 per had of population compared with £5.00 last year. Focus on income generation can be restored once the pandemic response is over.

## Contact Points

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**Background Papers**

Appendix A: Activity Report (separate document)

Appendix B: Performance indicators Table

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Table of PIs 2020/21

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	73.6	74.0
2. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	99.3	97.7	98.1	98.4
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 <b>Worcestershire 98.5</b>	98.4	Bromsgrove <b>98.4%</b> Malvern Hills <b>98.6%</b> Redditch <b>97.6%</b> Worcester City <b>98.4%</b> Wychavon <b>99.2%</b> Wyre Forest <b>98.2%</b> Worcestershire <b>98.5%</b>
4. % of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 <sup>st</sup> April each year	Annually	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.5
5 % of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days of receipt of a complete application	6-monthly	NA	97.4	NA	96.9%
6 % of vehicles found to be defective whilst in service Number of vehicles found to be defective by district and the percentage this	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	NA	<b>6 = 0.3% of 1514 vehicles on the road county-wide</b>  BDC 0 MHDC 0 RBC 6 WC 0

	represents of the fleet county-wide			Covid compliance in licensed premises so no taxi stop checks.		WDC 0 WFDC 0
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	67.5	68.2
8	Review of register of complaints/compliments	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	6/18	24/ 78	31/120	42/161
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	1.65 days per FTE	1.9 days per FTE
10	% of staff who enjoy working for WRS	Annually	NA	NA	NA	93.5%
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 <b>Worcestershire 4.3</b>	NA	Bromsgrove <b>5.4%</b> Malvern Hills <b>3.5%</b> Redditch <b>8.3%</b> Worcester City <b>5.7%</b> Wychavon <b>3.7%</b> Wyre Forest <b>5.1%</b> Worcestershire <b>5.0%</b>
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 <b>Worcestershire 0.94</b>	NA	Bromsgrove <b>2.56</b> Malvern Hills <b>2.45</b> Redditch <b>3.67</b> Worcester City <b>3.10</b> Wychavon <b>2.08</b> Wyre Forest <b>2.71</b> Worcestershire <b>2.74</b>
13	Total income expressed as a % of district base revenue	6-monthly	NA	4.37% (i.e. £131,901/£3,017,00)	NA	13.42% Note: £405,00 as a % of previous budget of £3.017M  Using the current budget

budget (16/17)					the figure yielded is 12.67%
14 Cost of regulatory services per head of population (Calculation will offset income against revenue budget)	Annually	NA	NA	NA	Based on outrun cost of £3.049M against the current ONS population estimate of 601,113 the service cost is:  <b>£5.07 per head</b>