

Worcestershire
Regulatory Services

Supporting and protecting you

Activity Report | 2021-22



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



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Hills
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Foreword

Welcome to the third activity data report for 2021/22.

Christmas has come and gone, and the days are slowly getting longer, giving hints of spring to come as the first snowdrops and irises brighten the frosty winter mornings. Although the numbers of nuisance complaints fell during Q3 to the usual level, the peak in summer this year meant an extended period when there was a significant queue of issues waiting to be addressed. This again did not help our satisfaction figures and the team remained under pressure for an extended period.

Food safety complaints fell to normal levels during quarter 3 from their summer peak. The team were therefore able to get a good number of proactive visits done as part of our return to more normal food law activities. On general health and safety work, numbers of both complaints and enquiries fell after the peak in the summer, however accident reports continued on their upward trend and by the end of the quarter had reach a level similar to the peak last year.

In Licensing, complaints and enquiries had a slightly upward trend this quarter but still around the norm and following the trajectory line. Applications however remained us as the licensed trade sectors continued to try to make up for lost ground and income following relaxing of pandemic controls. Members should recall that plan B did not come into effect until towards the end of the quarter.

In Technical Services, planning applications fell again, allowing more time for officers to focus on other activities and the volumes from earlier in the year. No doubt this will pick up in the spring. Also, work in dog control has remained steady but back up where they were 12 months ago with complaints/ enquiries similarly stable after a steep rise last year.

Throughout the period Covid work remained on-going. Our EHOs embedded in the Local Outbreak Response Team focused on business support. Covid compliance in the night time economy remained one of our priorities with plan B coming in, although much of the resource of our Covid Advisors was targeted to support pop-up vaccination clinics and doing the lost to follow-up activity of door knocking failed contacts. Finally, our local contact tracing team got busier and busier as case numbers increased with the dominant omicron variant.

So, yet another busy quarter for all of us. We hope you find the report interesting and if you've any questions please do contact myself or one of the Management Team.

Simon Wilkes
Head of Regulatory Services

Community Environmental Health

In quarter three we entered an autumn/winter period that posed many challenges. Not just that of COVID-19 but the return of our normal winter infections such as Influenza and Norovirus. We therefore wrote out to our businesses informing them of how they could prepare for the forthcoming challenges and so reduce the impact on their operations. There would also be a wider knock-on effect in protecting the wider community against the adverse effects of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

Many businesses were still being impacted with staff isolation as cases occurred in the workplace. Where these were linked with poor practices, the Local Outbreak Response Team within WRS Community Environmental Health Team intervened to help the business prevent or control the spread of infection. WRS officers also continued to carry out active monitoring programmes across all business sectors with the aim of providing advice to ensure safety. The period saw an escalation from education and encouragement to enforcement in respect of business Covid compliance as some businesses attempted to avoid the restrictions. Three Prohibition Notices were served following investigation and the team continued to work closely with the Police and Licensing colleagues to ensure licensed trade compliance.

WRS, supported by the partner legal team, were successful in seeing off an appeal against an Abatement Notice served on a major food distribution company and an Enforcement File was submitted in respect of a domestic noise nuisance in Worcester.

Licensing

The start of quarter three saw an increase in licensing applications and queries, with the volume similar to pre-covid levels and noticeably higher than this time last year. The team continues to take applications electronically therefore the level of complete applications being received continues to increase.

Licensing have continued to keep the emphasis this quarter on proactive enforcement and there have been two planned enforcement operations that took place in November. The first of these involved vehicle spot checks in Redditch, with the assistance of Crossgates depot, carrying out the required vehicle inspections. Officers gave ten vehicles notice to attend, and three out of the ten vehicles were presented with serious safety faults and were suspended. Faults included tyres worn, leaking brakes and fuel leaks. Four further vehicles were requested to be seen and these were all found to be free from major faults and compliant. On the same day, fourteen further unrequested vehicles were checked, and drivers spoken to if issues were found, but none were serious.

A further operation was carried out in the South of the County with WRS Licensing Officers conducting a joint hackney carriage and private hire vehicle/driver compliance check operation with West Mercia police. The exercise took place in Worcester City Centre with Officers being based from the ground floor of St Martins Gate Car park with prior approval.

The operation involved WRS Officers patrolling the City on foot, and also surrounding areas in a police patrol car, between 20:30 hours and midnight. The Officers patrolling the city centre identified a number of non-compliances, such as hackney carriage vehicles over-ranking on Foregate Street and drivers not wearing badges. A total of four hackney carriage drivers were issued with penalty points (under the WC HC&PH penalty point scheme). In addition to this, thirteen licensed hackney carriage vehicles were directed to St Martins Gate Car park for further inspection. On the whole the evening was a success with the majority of the drivers welcoming our efforts.

In December officers worked with partners and contributed to the success of the Victorian Fayre. Licensing officers were on hand to offer advice and guidance on all four days and worked with partners to ensure compliance levels were maintained.

Towards the end of quarter two, WRS appointed a Communications officer to provide wider engagement with partners and to promote the WRS brand and identity for businesses and residents. The positive feedback from partners has allowed WRS to reach out to a wider audience and communicate more of the positive work officers across WRS are doing across the County.

Night-time Economy Team

As part of our funded project work, the Night Time economy Team have been out every weekend and have carried out 226 visits in quarter three. These visits, which have been undertaken in conjunction with Environmental Health and West Mercia Police, have aimed to address problem premises or assess premises known to be trading in neighbourhoods with high infection rates. The changes in guidance on mandatory face coverings and covid passes towards the end of the quarter required the implementation of working passed 01:00 hours to ensure businesses were complying with the new rules. Overall compliance has been good and, with officers continuing to work every weekend assessing risk assessments where necessary, we hope this continues.

Technical Services

IT Development

During quarter three, our team has continued to respond to the IT support needs of the Service as it meets the many challenges and demands created by the pandemic response. During this time we have been working closely with our colleagues in Wyre Forest IT, and have helped to ensure all staff have the necessary equipment, access and training in IT to support them in their work roles.

As mentioned previously, a lot of work in quarter two had gone into planning and preparation for a program of upgrades and improvements to our back office systems. This third quarter was spent implementing these programs of upgrades and improvements, and this current program was completed by the end of the quarter. The aim of these is to ensure we always provide a reliable and resilient back office system to support all the staff who use it.

In addition, we have continued to provide Uniform support functions for other local authorities. We currently do this for Bromsgrove District Council's Planning department, and are about to do the same for Tewkesbury Borough Council's Environmental Health department.

Dog Wardens

The third quarter has remained steady, with the service having received contact in relation to over three hundred dog related matters (including enquiries for assistance or advice and complaints). WRS were successful in reuniting a high proportion of dogs with their owners, whilst rehoming the majority of others with recognised animal rehoming charities. Unfortunately, a puppy had to be put to sleep due to Leptospirosis. In addition, we have continued to look after two client dogs for owners who have had an extended stay in hospital, and a further three client dogs for owners that had been detained by the Police. WRS were also involved in a large handover of animals following a Police raid, and we were able to find new homes for two dogs and fourteen cats and kittens.

Contact Tracing

The third quarter saw a sharp rise in positive cases that required contact tracing, with an increase of 46% in the last week of December alone. Worcestershire has managed to maintain an overall average completion rate for cases of 91%, meaning that these cases had a successful trace with all details of contacts and places visited recorded, of this number 74% were completed within a 24 hours period. Of those that we were not able to complete 10.5% were reached but for varying reasons we were not able to fully complete the tracing call, examples of why this may be are the individual refusing to engage or inability to successfully identify all contacts, this is particularly relevant in school aged children. Unfortunately of those not traced, it was not possible to reach 15% of cases, this may be due to them being in hospital, providing incorrect contact details or them failing to respond to calls, emails and sms messages received. During December the rules on self-isolation were changed, which has reduced the window of time in which we are able to attempt to contact a case to complete a trace, this change highlights further the importance of making contact in a timely manner.

Air Quality

Following completion of traffic counts in Worcester City, work has commenced on the process of identifying the proportion of the traffic fleet that are the key contributors to elevated levels of pollution in specific areas of the city. Whilst it is obvious that the more polluting vehicles will be of concern, in some localities the make up of the traffic fleet may mean less polluting vehicles contribute more to the pollution levels. Once this is complete, work can begin on identifying the most effective action measures to resolve air quality. Elsewhere, work continues to install a continuous analyser in Wychbold and pollution monitoring equipment in Kidderminster.

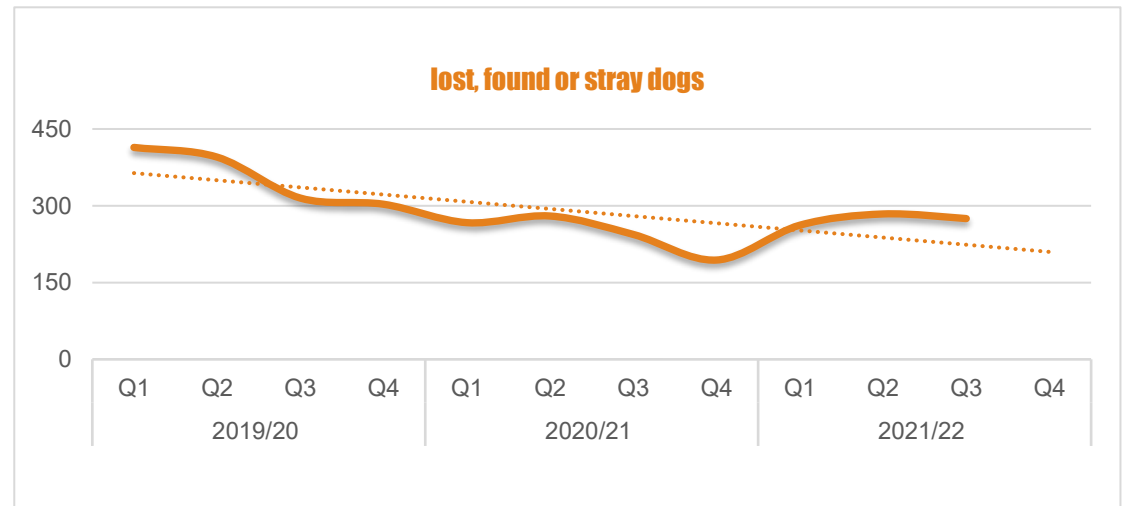
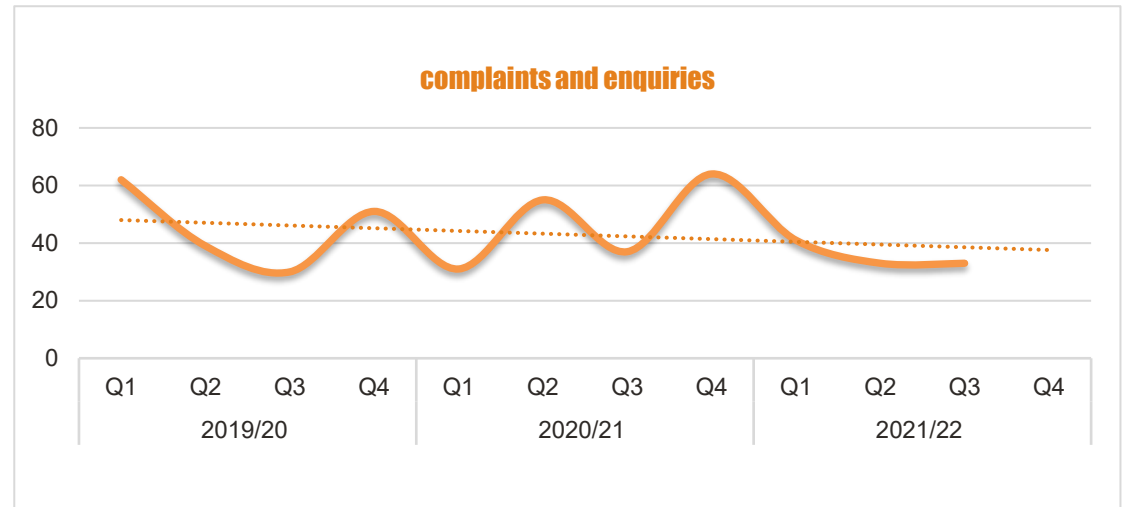
Contaminated Land

Update to follow.

The chart (top right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to dog control. Types of cases recorded under this category include fouling and persistent straying, dangerous dogs and welfare. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of dogs recorded by WRS as lost, found or seen straying.

The number of stray or lost dogs recorded by WRS during quarter three is broadly consistent with the previous quarter, but a marginal increase compared to previous years. Approximately 63% of cases related to 'contained' stray dogs; which means that a dog was found and held by, for example, a member of the public. Dogs were more likely to be returned to their owners, however, a higher proportion of dogs were rehomed between October and December.

In general terms, WRS receives a low number of dog control complaints. Based on the 20 complaints recorded during quarter three, 9 related to fouling and persistent straying, 7 related to dangerous dogs, and 4 related to welfare concerns.

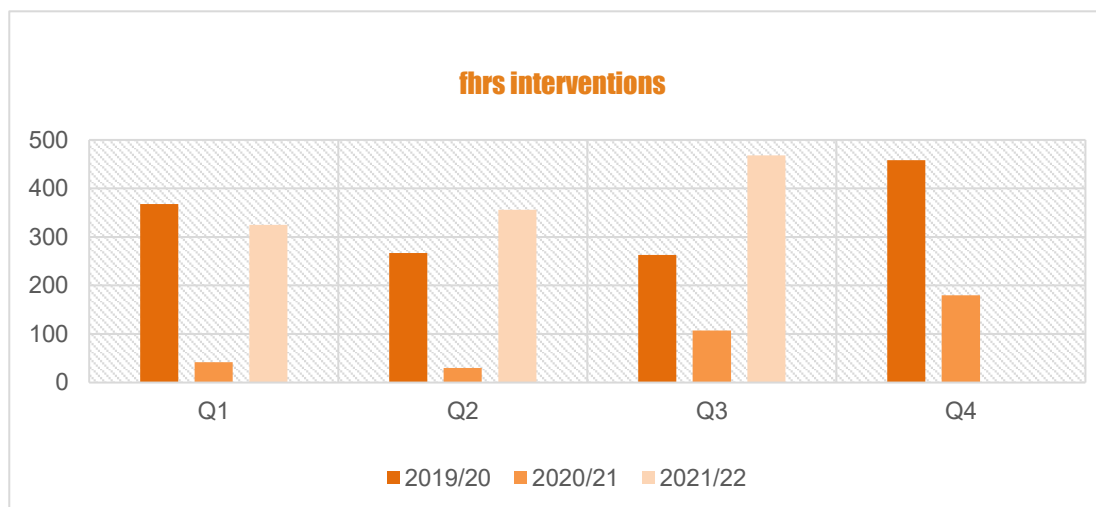
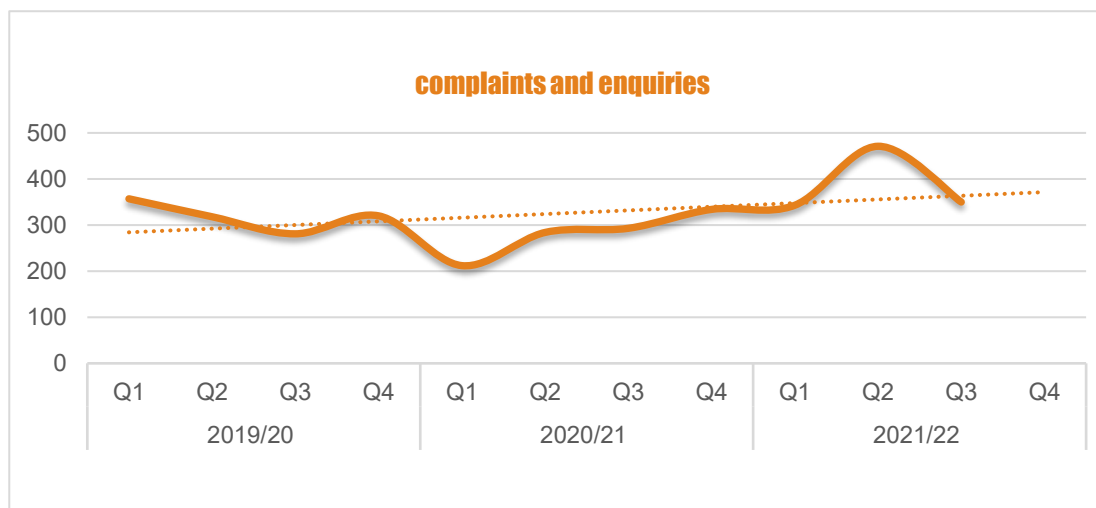


Updated to follow.

The chart (top right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to food safety. Types of cases recorded under this category include complaints about food products, hygiene of premises complaints and requests for business advice. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of interventions conducted by WRS at premises included in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, commonly known as FHRS.

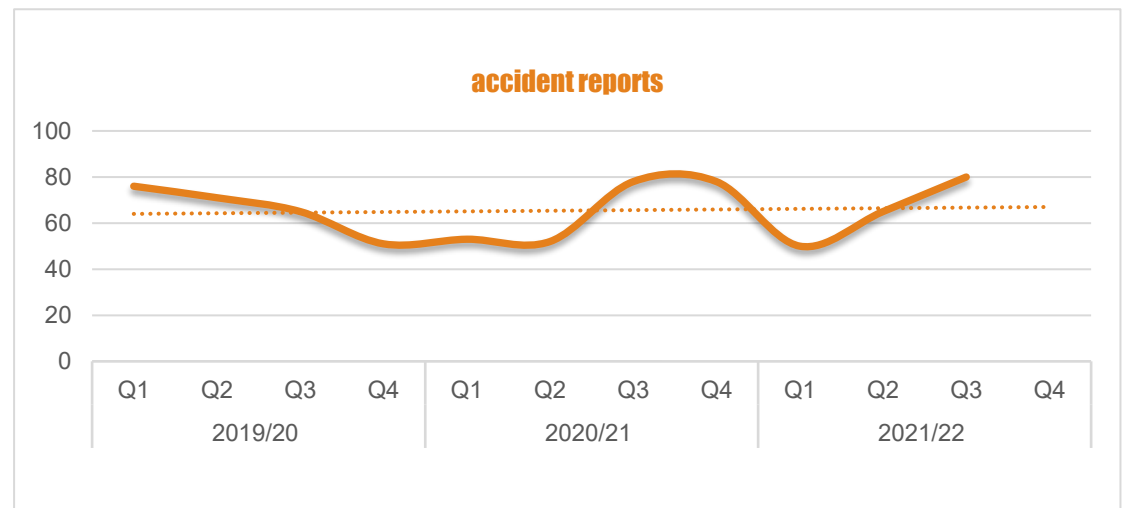
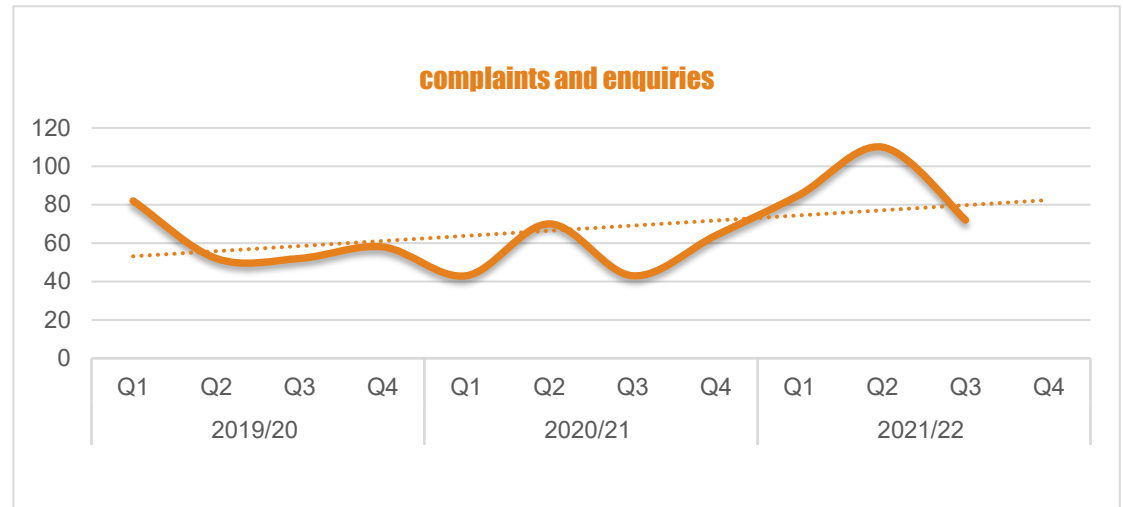
The number of food safety cases recorded by WRS during quarter three is a reduction of 26% compared to the previous quarter, but an increase compared to previous years. In general terms, a higher proportion of food safety cases are enquiries including requests for advice or export health certificates. Based on the 350 complaints recorded, 81% related to products purchased from food premises, whilst 19% related to hygiene standards and practices.

Of the 468 interventions conducted during quarter three at premises included in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS), 31 were rated as non-compliant (0, 1 or 2). Approximately 74% of these ratings were issued to hospitality businesses.



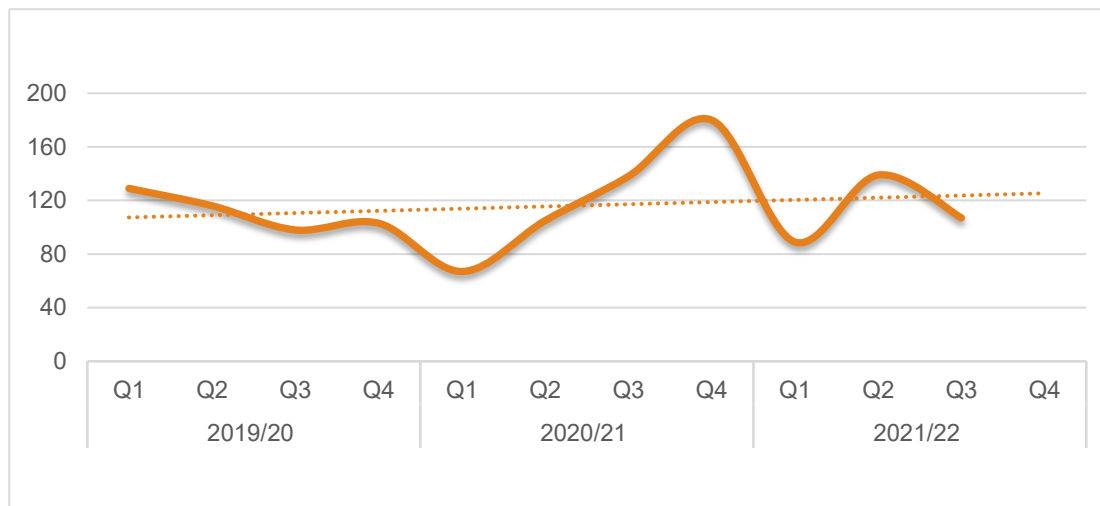
The chart (top right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to health and safety at work. This includes requests for business advice. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of notifications received by WRS relating to accidents.

The number of health and safety cases recorded by WRS during quarter three is a reduction of 12% compared to the previous quarter, but is a marginal increase compared to previous years. Approximately 52% of cases were reports of accidents, with 40% relating to COVID outbreaks. A further 28% of accidents related to injuries where a worker was incapacitated for more than seven days. The remaining cases related to injuries to members of the public, accidents where major injuries were sustained, and two dangerous occurrence.



The chart (right) shows the number of information requests recorded by WRS over a three year period. Information requests relate to the following;

- Environmental Information Requests
- Freedom of Information Requests
- Requests for information under the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)



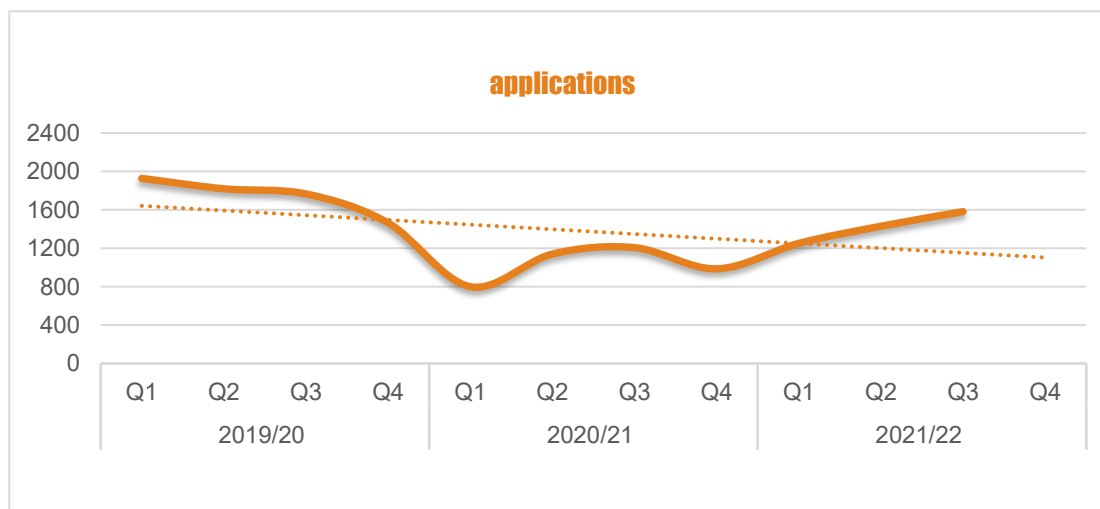
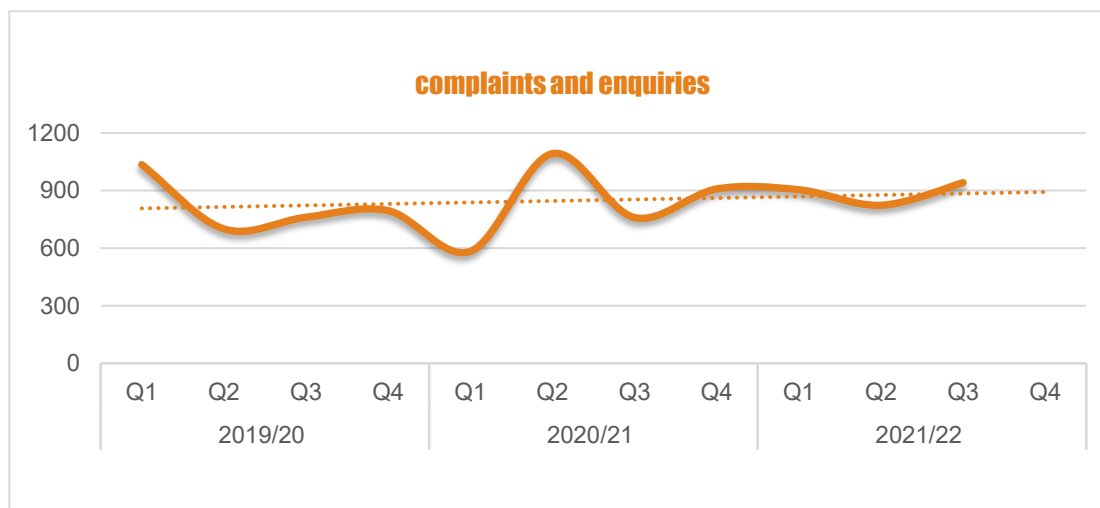
The chart (top right) shows the number complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to licensing. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of licensing applications.

Licensing complaints, enquiries and applications relate to the following;

- Alcohol and entertainment (including gambling)
- Animals
- Caravans
- Scrap metal
- Sex establishments
- Skin piercing
- Street trading
- Taxis

The number of licensing cases recorded by WRS during quarter three is an increase of 12% compared to the previous quarter, and consistent with the volume recorded during 2019/20. Approximately 70% of cases were applications and registrations; with 28% relating to taxi vehicle licences, 24% relating to temporary events, and 16% relating to taxi driver licences.

In general terms, WRS receives a higher number of enquiries about licensing matters than complaints about licensed or unlicensed activity. Based on the 135 complaints recorded during quarter three, 33% related to taxis, 24% related to street trading or amenities, and 16% related to animal licensing.

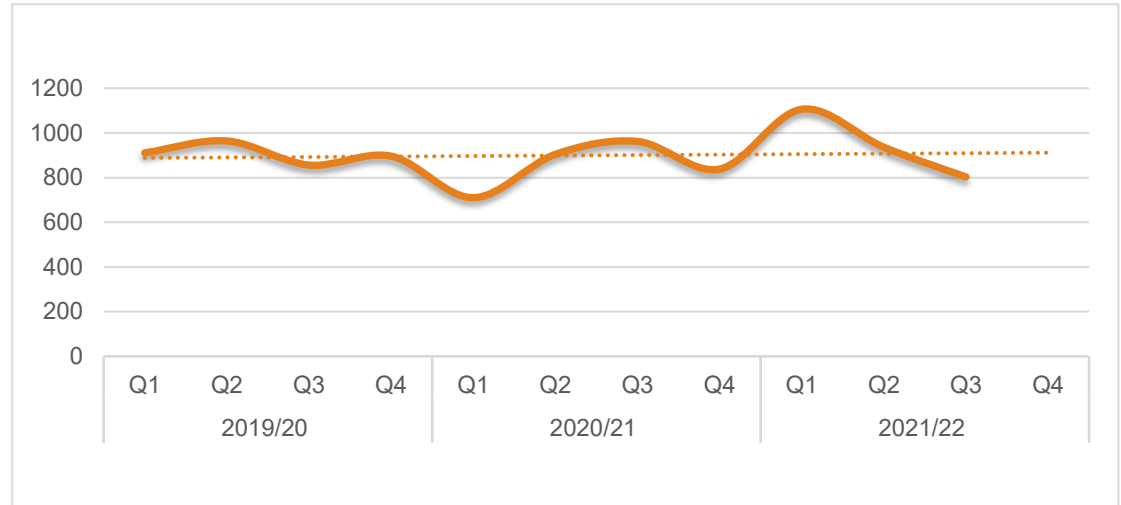


The chart (right) shows the number of planning enquiries completed by WRS over a three year period. The majority of these requests are consultations but can also include requests to discharge conditions.

Planning requests relate to the following;

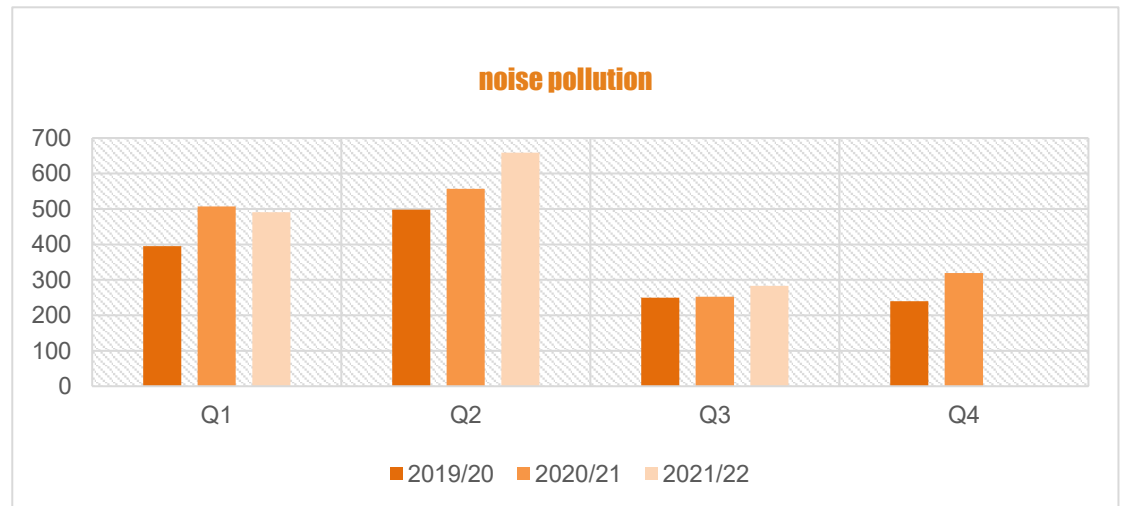
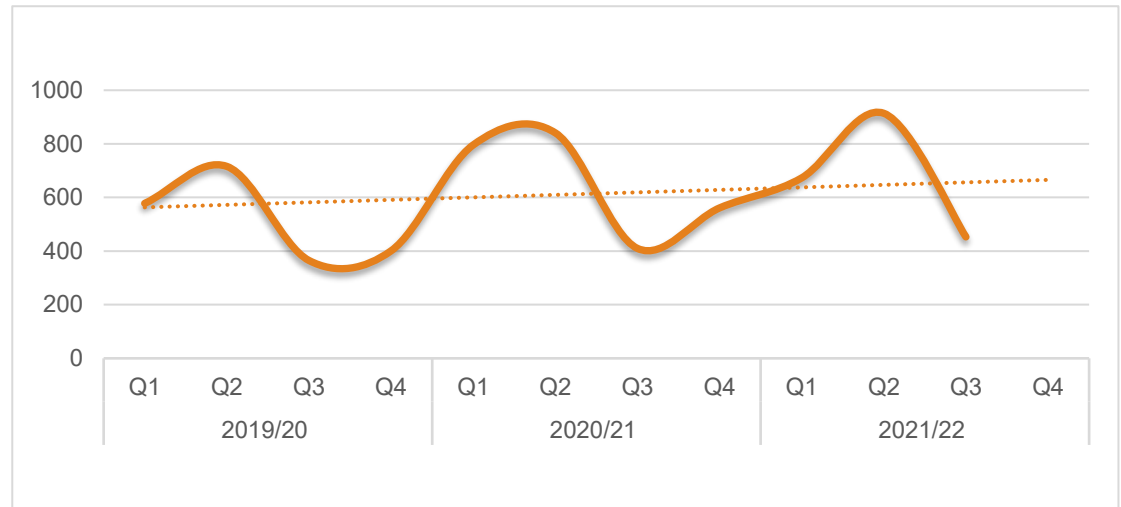
- Air Quality
- Contaminated Land
- Environmental Permitting
- Food
- Health and Safety
- Nuisance / Noise
- Private Water Supplies

The number of planning enquiries completed by WRS during quarter three is a reduction of 14% compared to the previous quarter, and lower than previous years. Approximately 90% of enquiries were consultations, whilst 45% continued to relate to contaminated land. Just under a quarter of planning enquiries were completed, on a contractual basis, on behalf of other local authorities.



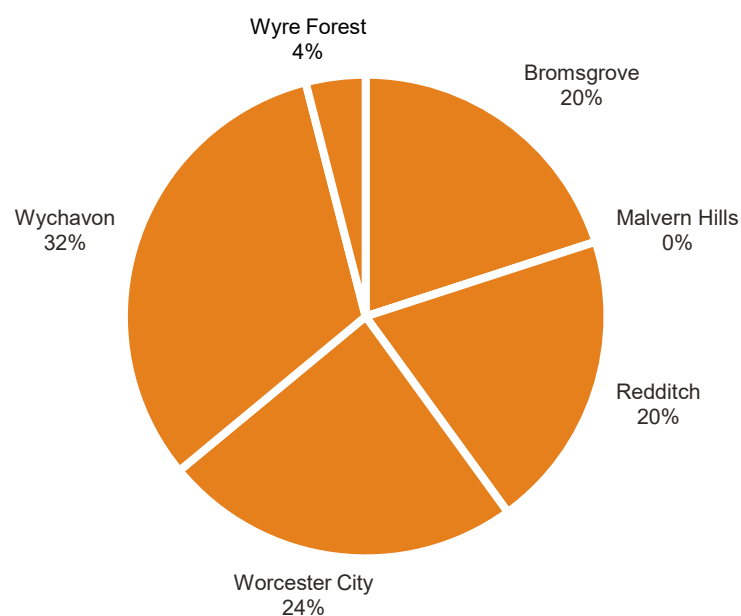
The chart (right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to pollution. Types of cases recorded under this category include contamination incidents, air pollution (smoke, fumes and gases), light pollution and noise pollution. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries relating to noise pollution.

The number of pollution cases recorded by WRS during quarter three is a reduction of 50% compared to the previous quarter, but consistent with seasonal variations. Approximately 60% of cases related to noise nuisances, with noise from domestic properties (such as from dog barking or from audio-visual equipment) continuing to be most prominent. A further 17% of cases related to smoke nuisances including the burning of domestic or commercial waste.



The table (right) shows the top 25 wards in Worcestershire with the highest case rate for noise pollution cases. It also shows the relative population and the number of cases recorded. The chart (below) shows the top 25 wards by district.

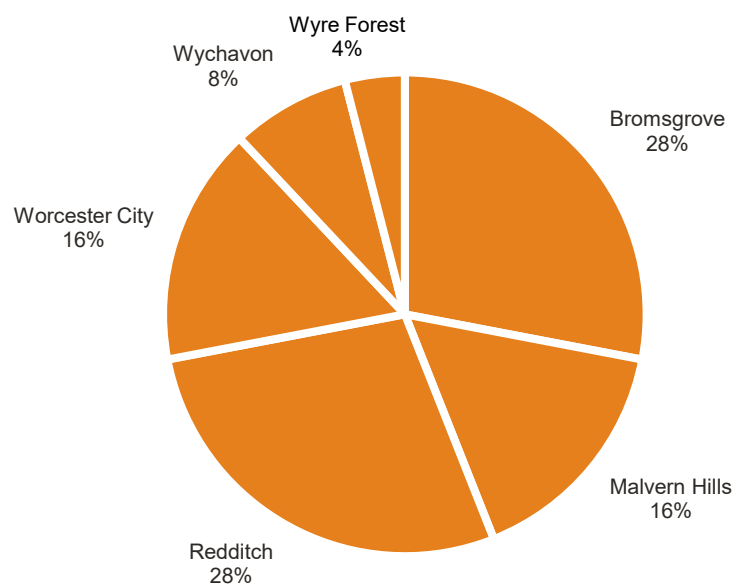
Note: Data shown on this page represents the 'year to date' and will continue to increase each quarter until the end of year report is published.



Ward	Total	Population	Rate
Eckington	22	2,669	8.24
Bedwardine	35	8,167	4.29
Norton	15	3,707	4.05
Sanders Park	14	3,651	3.83
Pinvin	11	3,105	3.54
Arboretum	21	6,233	3.37
Claines	25	8,076	3.10
Rainbow Hill	17	5,511	3.08
Batchley And Brockhill	27	8,783	3.07
Cathedral	36	11,763	3.06
Avoncroft	10	3,300	3.03
Church Hill	23	8,062	2.85
Greenlands	26	9,329	2.79
Marlbrook	8	2,890	2.77
Drakes Broughton	7	2,577	2.72
Winyates	22	8,184	2.69
Mitton	27	10,047	2.69
Perryfields	4	1,501	2.66
Central (Redditch)	18	6,844	2.63
Harvington And Norton	7	2,756	2.54
Little Hampton	14	5,818	2.41
Evesham South	13	5,423	2.40
Lovett And North Claines	15	6,499	2.31
Warndon	13	5,669	2.29
Hartlebury	7	3,140	2.23

The table (right) shows the top 25 wards in Worcestershire with the highest case rate for noise pollution cases. It also shows the relative population and the number of cases recorded. The chart (below) shows the top 25 wards by district.

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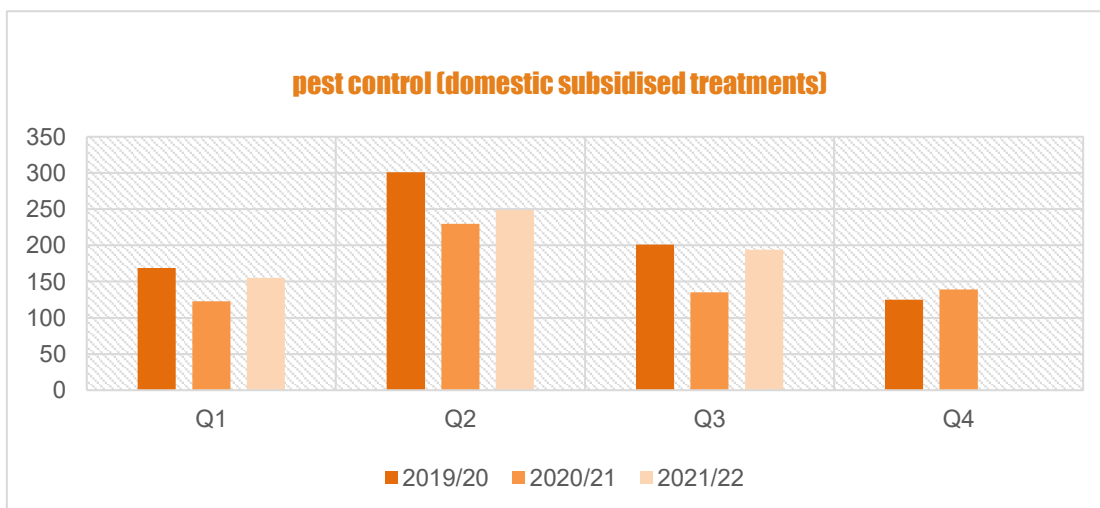
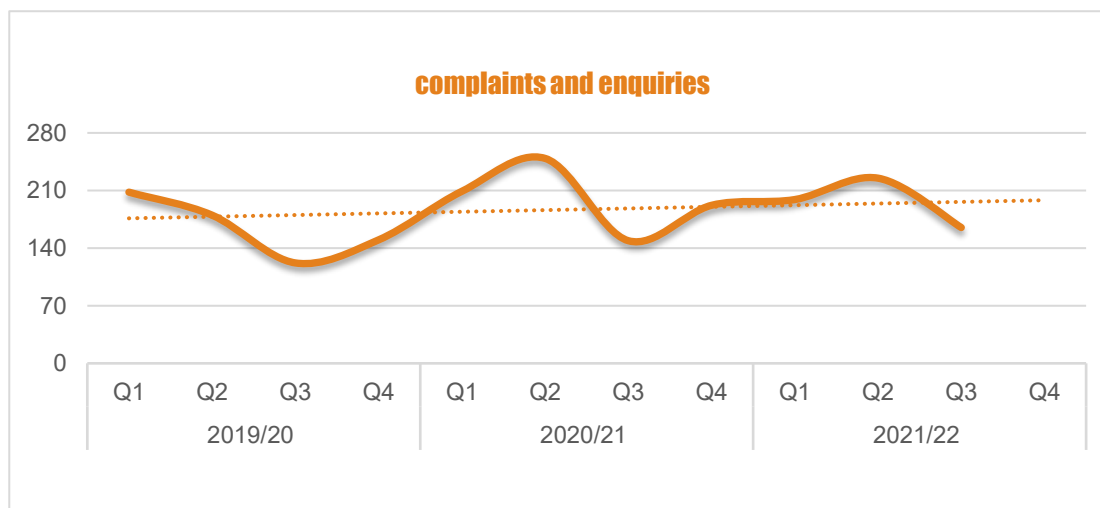


Ward	Total	Population	Rate
Wribbenhall And Arley	34	5,444	6.25
Perryfields	8	1,501	5.33
Abbey	31	6,620	4.68
Norton	17	3,707	4.59
Avoncroft	15	3,300	4.55
Lowes Hill	13	2,903	4.48
Warndon	25	5,669	4.41
Sanders Park	16	3,651	4.38
Charford	15	3,665	4.09
Central (Redditch)	28	6,844	4.09
Rubery South	12	2,984	4.02
Saint John	34	8,836	3.85
Lodge Park	21	5,591	3.76
Bedwardine	29	8,167	3.55
Chase	22	6,217	3.54
Lindridge	8	2,261	3.54
Greenlands	32	9,329	3.43
Winyates	28	8,184	3.42
Church Hill	27	8,062	3.35
Hallow	6	1,840	3.26
Gorse Hill	19	5,839	3.25
Crabbs Cross	18	5,647	3.19
Evesham South	17	5,423	3.13
Pickersleigh	20	6,397	3.13
Droitwich Central	8	2,621	3.05

The chart (top right) shows the number of complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to public health. Types of cases recorded under this category include accumulations, public burials and pest control. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of subsidised pest control treatments have been carried out by contractors at domestic properties in four Worcestershire Districts (Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch and Wychavon). Worcester City and Wyre Forest do not offer a subsidised pest control service.

The number off public health cases recorded by WRS during quarter three is a reduction of 26% compared to the previous quarter, but a marginal increase compared to previous years. Approximately 65% of cases related to pest control; whether enquiries about treatments and sewer baiting, or complaints about pest control issues caused by the activity of neighbouring residents or businesses. A further 28% of cases were complaints relating to accumulations at domestic properties which can also include pest control issues.

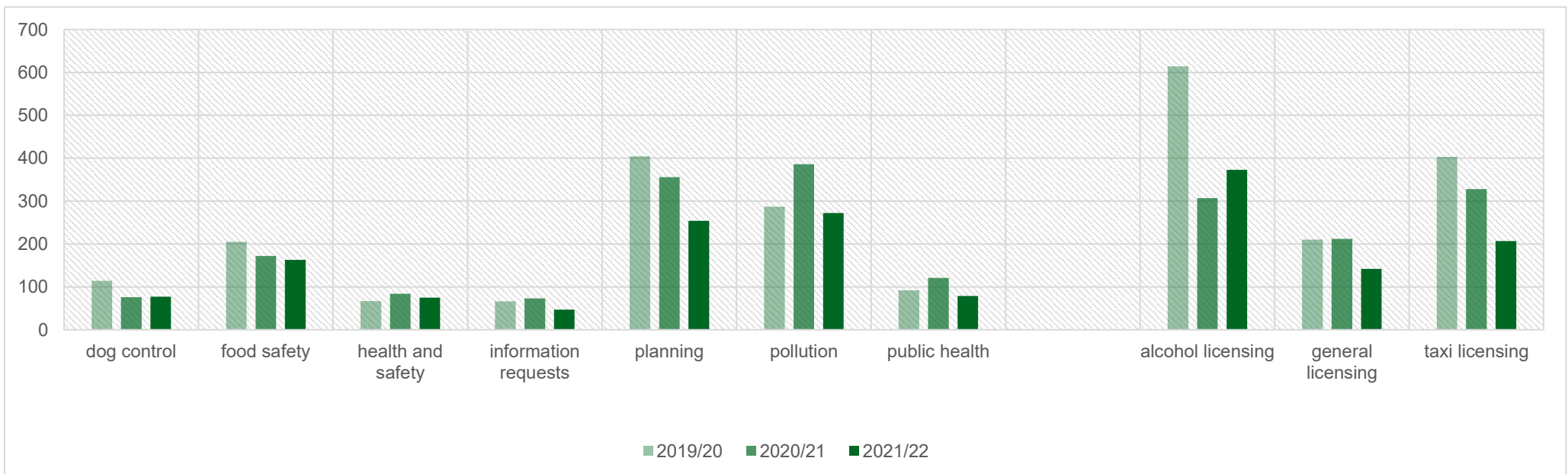
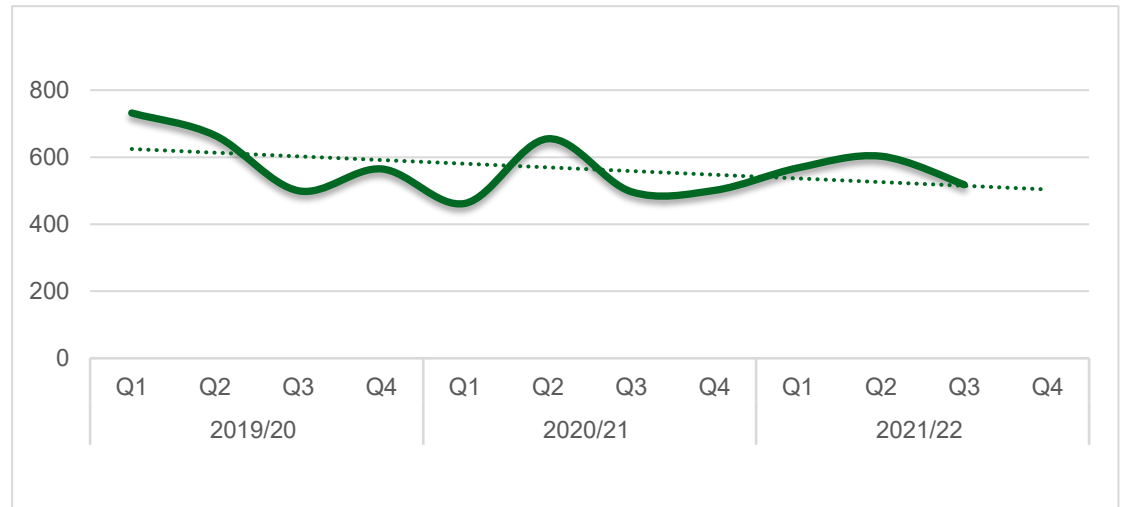
Of the 249 domestic treatments undertaken during quarter three, approxiamtely 60% were due to issues with rats. In addition, 75% were undertaken due to pests at properties in the Redditch and Wychavon districts.



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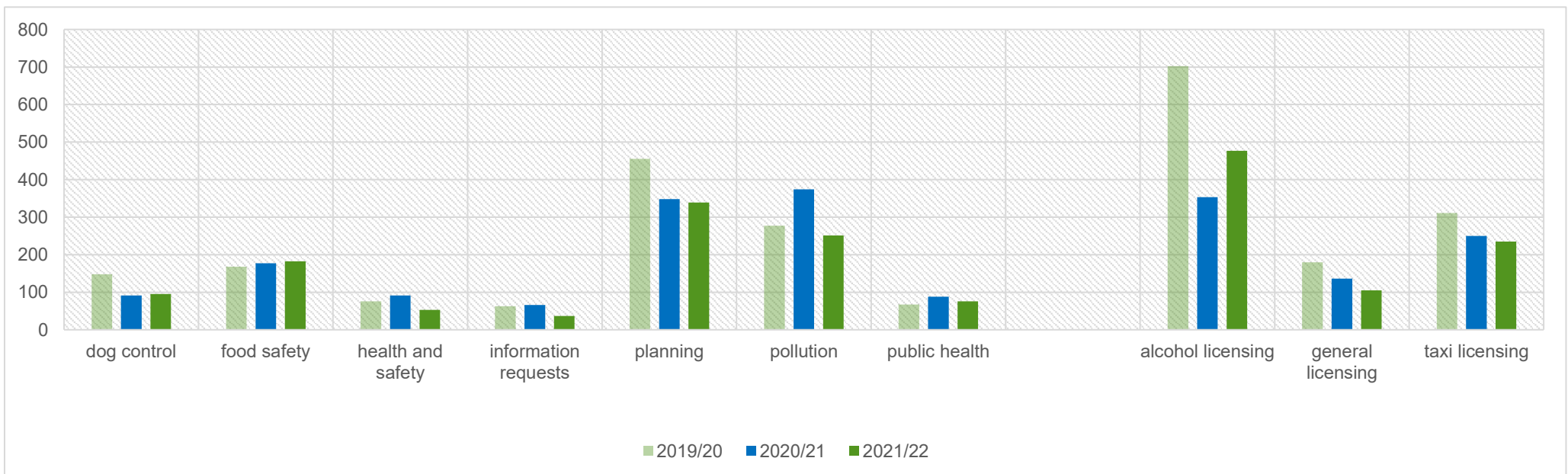
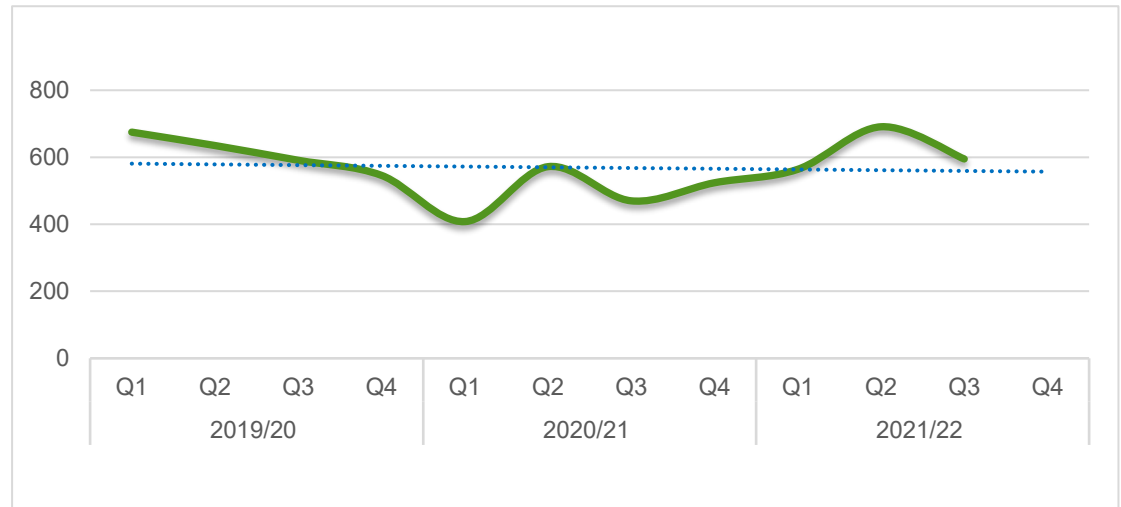
The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Bromsgrove district.

Note: The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The figure for the current year is a cumulative total based on each of the reporting periods. This figure will continue to increase until the end of year report is published.



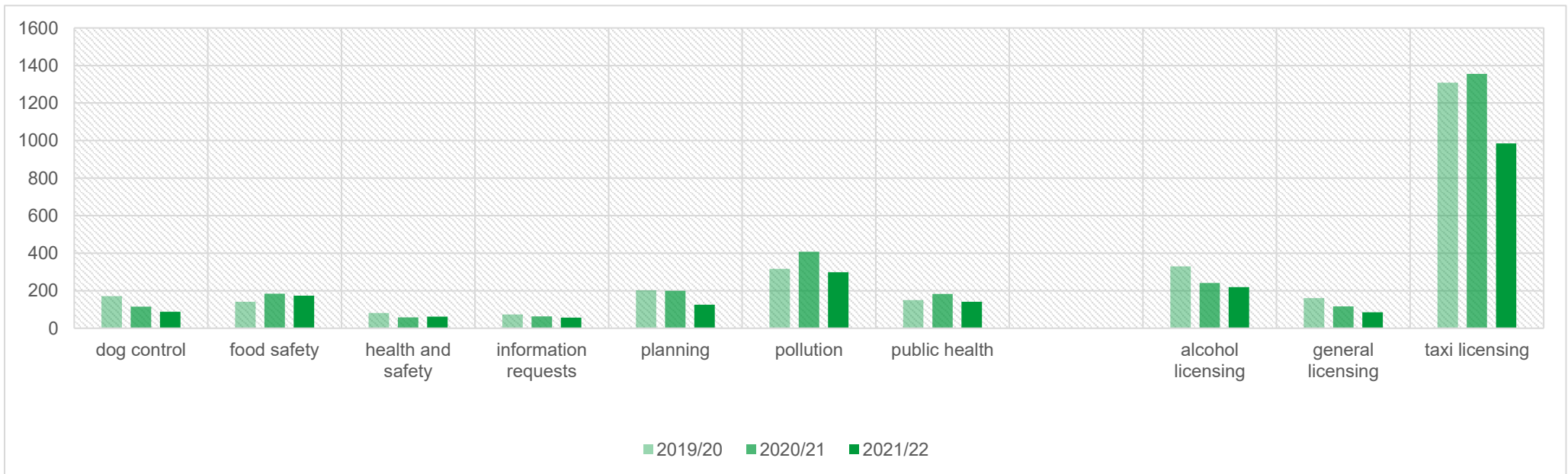
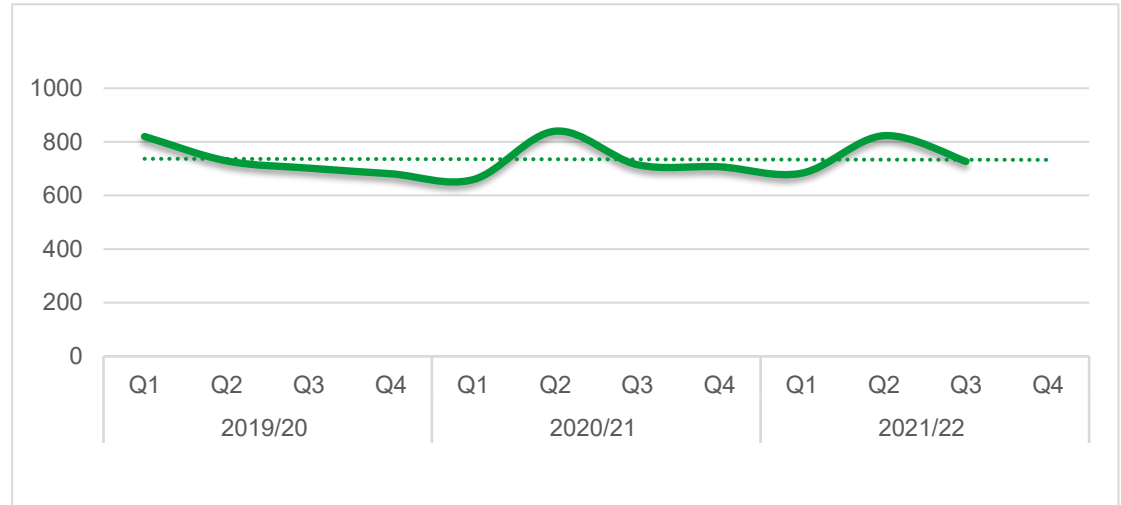
The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Malvern Hills district.

Note: The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The figure for the current year is a cumulative total based on each of the reporting periods. This figure will continue to increase until the end of year report is published.



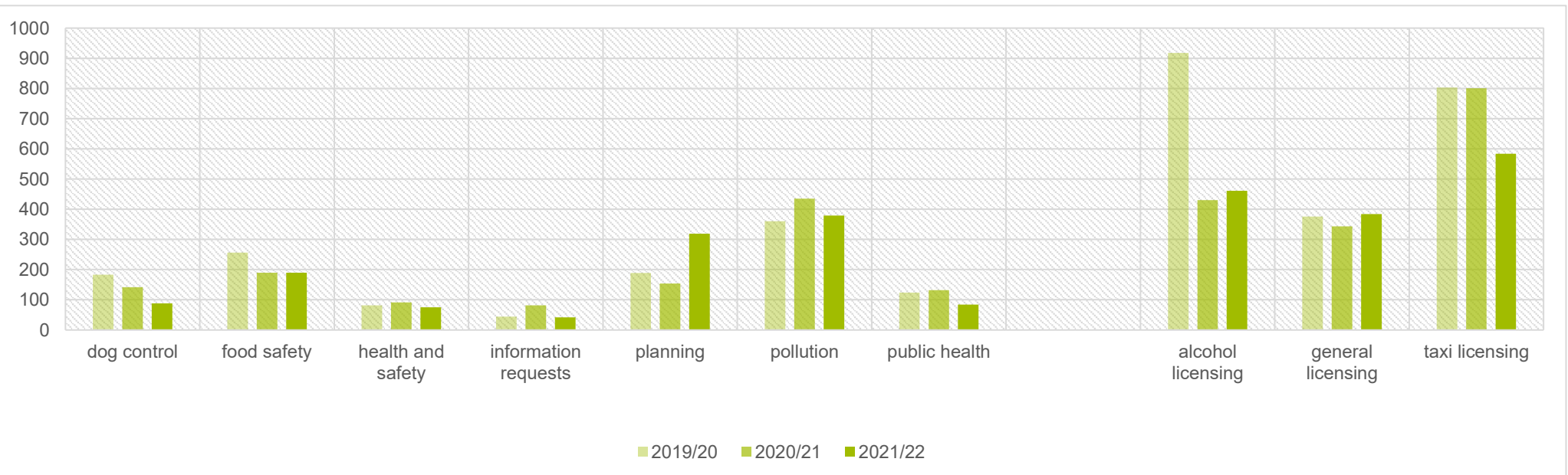
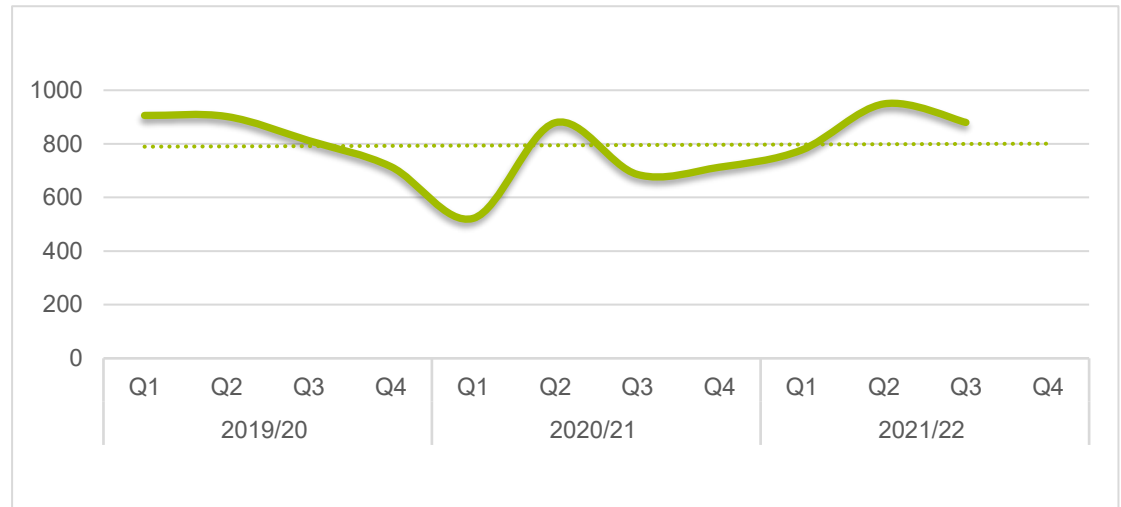
The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Redditch district.

Note: The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The figure for the current year is a cumulative total based on each of the reporting periods. This figure will continue to increase until the end of year report is published.



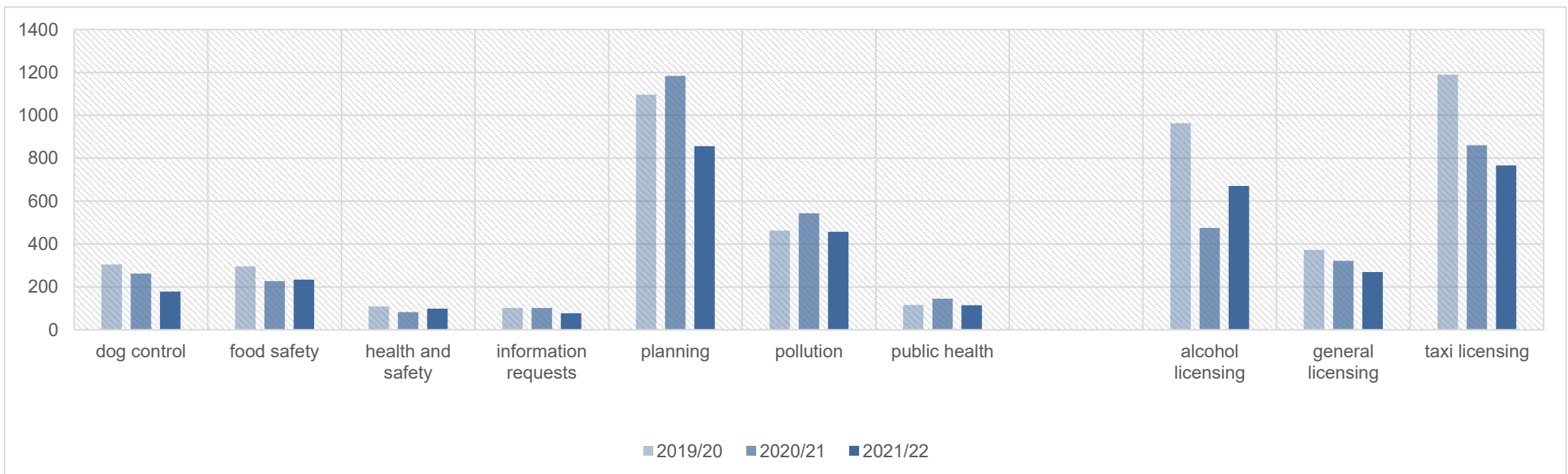
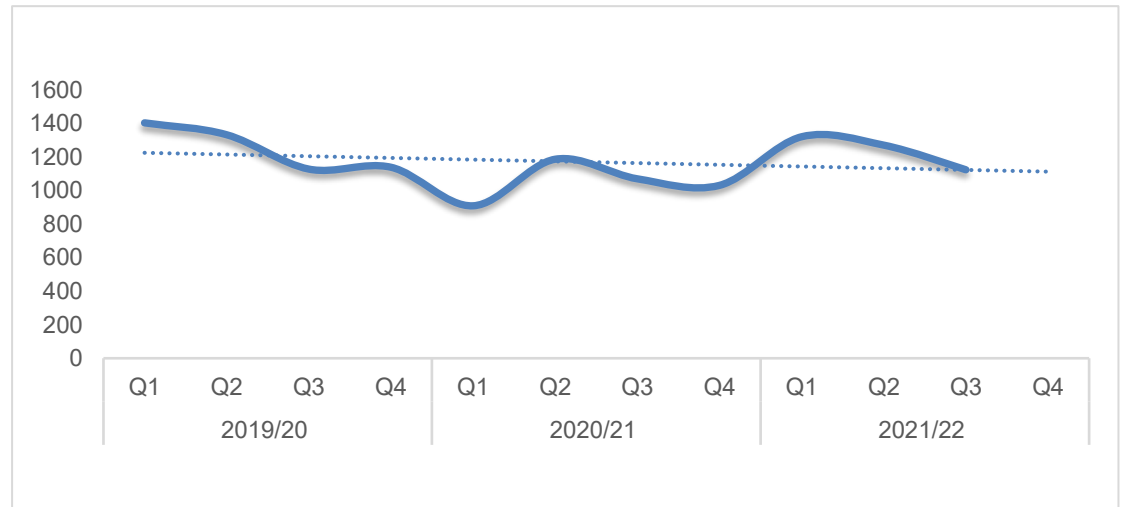
The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Worcester City district.

Note: The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The figure for the current year is a cumulative total based on each of the reporting periods. This figure will continue to increase until the end of year report is published.



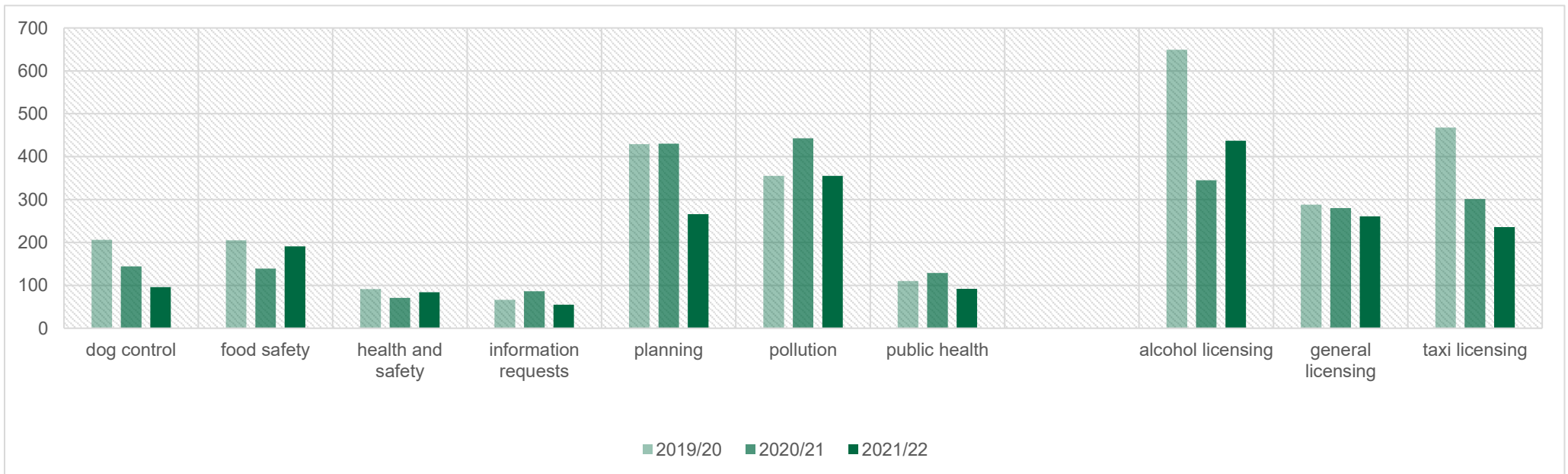
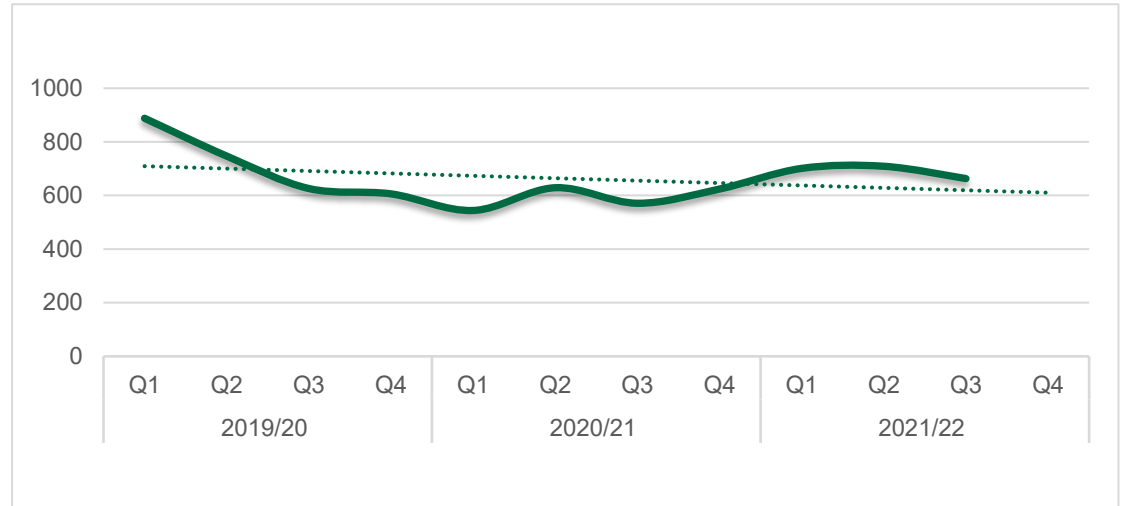
The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Wychavon district.

Note: The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The figure for the current year is a cumulative total based on each of the reporting periods. This figure will continue to increase until the end of year report is published.

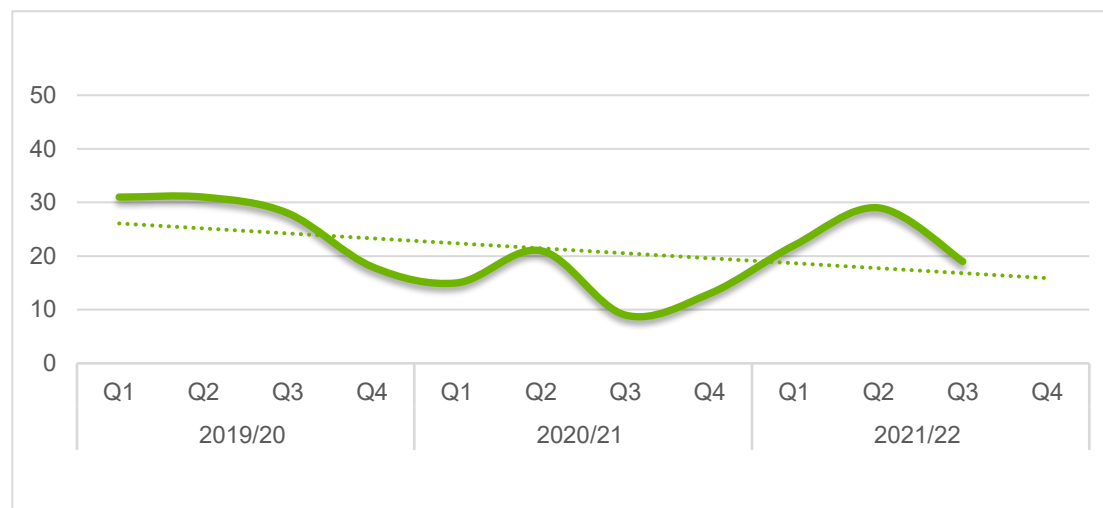


The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Wyre Forest district.

Note: The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The figure for the current year is a cumulative total based on each of the reporting periods. This figure will continue to increase until the end of year report is published.

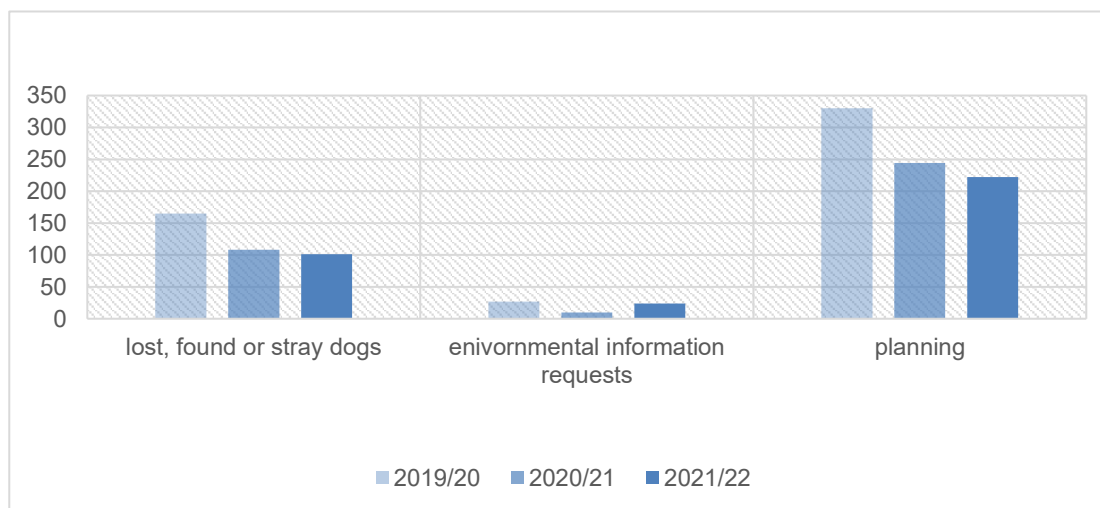
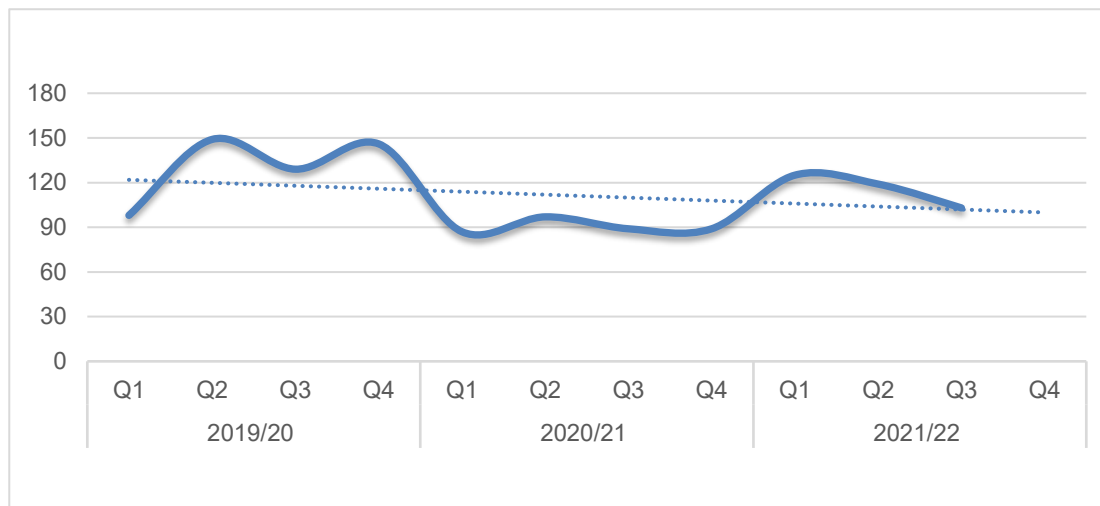


The dog control work undertaken for Cheltenham Borough Council is part of a contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was recently renewed and has been highly successful in reducing stray dog numbers for Cheltenham Borough Council as well as utilising existing WRS resource and expertise. Such arrangements enable economies of scale to be realised and the continued retention of valuable assets to the benefit of Partner Authorities. As with other Gloucestershire and Worcestershire authorities, the numbers of stray dogs are reducing annually. There is concern however that, post lockdown, there will be an increase in the number of abandoned stray dogs as people go back to work and dogs display attachment issues. This is coupled with the inability of rehoming charities to allow prospective new owners access to view dogs available.

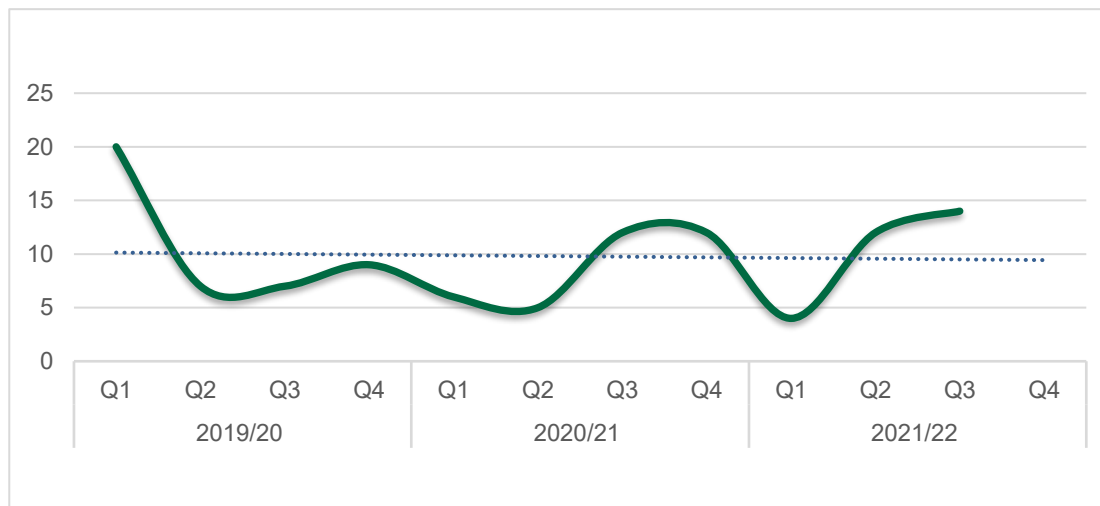


The dog control work undertaken for Gloucester City Council is part of a contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was recently renewed and has been highly successful in reducing stray dog numbers for Gloucester City Council as well as utilising existing WRS resource and expertise. Such arrangements enable economies of scale to be realised and the continued retention of valuable assets to the benefit of Partner Authorities. As with other Gloucestershire and Worcestershire authorities, the numbers of stray dogs are reducing annually. There is concern however that, post lockdown, there will be an increase in the number of abandoned stray dogs as people go back to work and dogs display attachment issues. This is coupled with the inability of rehoming charities to allow prospective new owners access to view dogs available.

Planning work undertaken on behalf of Gloucester City Council was notably higher during quarter one; with the number of consultations completed an increase of 54% compared to 2019/20 and 2020/21.



South Gloucestershire, being located on the outskirts of Bristol, was subject to significant contaminative industries and activities historically. Pressures on brownfield development recently have presented the authority with a large volume of planning applications on significantly contaminated and complex sites. For a number of years now WRS has been asked to assist with this work focusing on the complex sites, so whilst numbers of referrals remain low, when presented they tend to be time consuming and complex. Work demand is dependant on resource availability at South Gloucestershire Council and, as a consequence, WRS is retained to undertake repeat work for them when this becomes an issue.



The dog control work undertaken for Tewkesbury Borough Council is part of a contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was recently renewed and has been highly successful in reducing stray dog numbers for Tewkesbury Borough Council as well as utilising existing WRS resource and expertise. Such arrangements enable economies of scale to be realised and the continued retention of valuable assets to the benefit of Partner Authorities. As with other Gloucestershire and Worcestershire authorities, the numbers of stray dogs are reducing annually. There is concern however that, post lockdown, there will be an increase in the number of abandoned stray dogs as people go back to work and dogs display attachment issues. This is coupled with the inability of rehoming charities to allow prospective new owners access to view dogs available.

Planning work undertaken on behalf of Tewkesbury Borough Council was notably higher during quarter one; with the number of consultations completed an increase of 38% and 60% compared to 2019/20 and 2020/21 respectively.

