

Worcestershire
Regulatory Services

Supporting and protecting you

Activity Report | 2022-23



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



Malvern
Hills
District
Council
www.malvern hills.gov.uk



REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL
making
a
difference
www.redditchbc.gov.uk



Worcester
CITY COUNCIL



WYCHAVON
DISTRICT COUNCIL
good services, good value



Wyre Forest
District Council

Foreword

Welcome to the first activity report for 2022/3. It follows the format you will all now be familiar with and covers the period 1st April to 30th June 2022, but the graphs and tables allow comparison with the data in previous years.

Stray dog numbers were up in the first quarter, by 18% on the same period last year and 22% on the one previous to that. Officers have wondered for some time, if the boom in dog ownership during the period of Covid restrictions would lead to some increases. 68% of strays were reunited with their owners, but obviously that does mean that many have to be re-homed by the charities we work with. This has led to some congestion in kennels and officers have had to work hard with our contractors to ensure all dogs seized have somewhere to be placed.

Officers began the final year of the FSA's Food Recovery programme with a significant number of interventions, more than in Q1 last year and much higher than the previously year when visit programmes were suspended by the Agency. Food complaints fell very slightly this quarter compared to the same quarter last year but remain significantly above the previous year presumably as business activity was curtailed due to the pandemic. Activity on Health and Safety at Work follows a similar pattern to previous years but at a slightly elevated level.

Information requests were down, as were requests for planning support. These two figures are often linked as many information reports link into the planning process.

Licensing complaints and enquiries follows the now well know level trend. There continued to be a slight increase in license applications as the business community continues to build back post pandemic.

Pollution and nuisance complaints continued the upward trend we saw in Q4 at the end of last financial year. We always see an upturn into the warmer months, but this year has felt very pressured, as you will see when we report Quarter 2 in November.

We hope the report demonstrates the volume of work staff are undertaking and that some of the stories behind the numbers highlight the difficulties staff sometimes face. If you have further queries, please feel free to contact myself and the Team Managers.



Simon Wilkes
Head of Regulatory Services

Quarter One

The Community Environmental Health Team were kept incredibly busy throughout quarter one across the whole range of environmental health work.

Tragically we received a report in respect of a fatality at a white-collar boxing event which we are investigating in close collaboration with the Coroner's Office. Additional ongoing health and safety investigations include an accident involving a vehicle hitting an employee on private land in Kinver, whereby we had to detain the vehicle for examination, and a prosecution file has been submitted to Legal Services in respect of a serious forklift truck incident at a major retailer.

Your Officers resolved a significant private water supply issue in Timberhonger, providing support to the UK Security Health Authority in providing notices to residents on elevated Arsenic levels. Officers worked hard with landlord to resolve the issue, getting the water tested and implementing a regime for regular testing.

The Team attended, and in some cases chaired, Safety Advisory Groups throughout the period to ensure public safety including those convened for the Commonwealth Games Queens Baton Relay throughout the County.

In nuisance work, WRS worked with a car wash in Pershore in meeting its undertaking in respect of works to resolve a noise problem. We were also able to provide expertise in advising a local business in preventing light nuisance to residents where a film company was using their premises to film at night. We continued to receive a significant number of complaints concerning pubs having live music events in their gardens, often where they were fundamentally unsuitable for such events due to the proximity of neighbouring residential premises. We adopted a proactive intelligence-led approach to monitoring various large-scale events planned through the summer and served abatement notices in respect of noise from fans in Evesham, a cockerel crowing at a café in Bromsgrove, noise from barking at kennels and odour nuisance in Ombersley linked with a Planning enforcement notice. Another cockerel case made the national press, appearing in "The Sun", where we had been able to intervene and resolve the case.

A landowner in Worcester was served with a notice in respect of controlling rats and a Simple Caution was issued in respect of a long-running nuisance case involving barking dogs in Worcester. We also dealt with disturbance from a warehouse rave, carried out a BS4142 noise assessment on an industrial company in Evesham and investigated smoke nuisance from a business directed to burn tomato plants by The Animal and Plant Health Authority in Throckmorton.

A sad case involved the case of a deceased gentleman who had been resting with a Worcestershire Funeral Director for several months. We were contacted as conditions were getting very difficult for the staff and, for the dignity of the deceased, a funeral was needed. The situation was that money could not be released from the Estate and the daughter was abroad and unable to act. Your Officer intervened under the Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984, and we were able to make the appropriate arrangements.

In food safety work, we were able to deliver 729 Inspections of which 185 were "first time" as we continued to focus on the Food Standards Agency Post Pandemic Recovery Programme which commenced in August 2021 and runs to March 2023.

Quarter One

The first quarter of every year always sees a steady increase in applications and this quarter has been no different with an increase in TENs applications leading the way as usual this time of year closely followed by taxi licensing.

The team are out doing more visits than ever before in all areas of licensing and this has illustrated where more resource have been allocated and more so in certain areas rather than others. These compliance visits will continue throughout the remainder of the year. Caravan licensing inspections have reached the second phase of the project with the majority of less contentious sites across Wychavon and Worcester City now being visited. There have been scheduled Taxi checks undertaken across the County and some in partnership with the County Council and officers are still finding problems with vehicles. The team will be looking to do more communication activities with the trade on the back of this. Animal licensing inspections have also peaked with officers now looking at the interim inspections that are required to be undertaken within the duration of a licence.

Within Taxi Licensing the Taxi Standards work has continued and the team are working with various suppliers to agree a provider for the 'Competency Certificate' whereby new drivers will undertake a suite of training as required under the new guidance.

Licensing officers have also commenced their annual training sessions for Members across all districts with more training to be provided later in the once the Taxi Standards have been implemented.

Quarter One

Information Management

Quarter one is particularly busy for our Information Management and Database Administration team with the preparation and submission of most of the service's government returns. Much of the day to day activity has been focused on increasing security and resilience of our systems. This has included include regular updates and patches to our main back office system, facilitating the recall of all laptops and mobiles for security updates, and promotion of cyber security awareness for all staff. In addition the team continues to help to support the income generation target of the service by delivering paid for services to Bromsgrove and Redditch Council's Planning Department, Worcestershire County Council Trading Standards and Tewkesbury Borough Council's Environmental Health & Licensing teams.

COVID Advisors

With no COVID restrictions in place the work of supporting the public and businesses with COVID recovery was continued through the first quarter of this year. This supporting Environmental Health colleagues providing advice and guidance to businesses through low level food hygiene inspections where compliance had been adversely impacted by the pandemic and to residents affected by nuisance where businesses had sought to change their operating methods to comply with restrictions or adapt to public demands post COVID. On the 20th April COVID advisors assisted with the Vaccine pop up clinic in Worcester where there was an uptake of 90 vaccinations, and also at further clinics in Worcester on the 7th May with an uptake of 71 Vaccinations and 28th May with an uptake of 12 vaccinations.

With COVID funding due to come to an end, a process of diversification was undertaken to enable the team to utilise their skills in engagement and contribute towards the service's income generation targets by providing meaningful assistance to our Partner authorities with the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Advisors, have been carrying out safeguarding checks for the guests arriving from Ukraine for Bromsgrove and Redditch during this period.

Enforcement Team

During quarter one of this year, we have been utilising former contact tracing staff with enforcement skills and knowledge to complement our existing service provision and enable us to widen it by assisting Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, and Wychavon Planning Enforcement teams. For Bromsgrove and Redditch, we have been delivering the vast majority of the service delivery deploying a range of investigative and enforcement tools to assist with COVID-backlogs and skills, knowledge and experience shortages. The work is exceptionally varied, ranging from unauthorised changes of use to breaches of permitted development rights and for Redditch and Bromsgrove areas will continue for the rest of the year.

Air Quality

June saw the completion and submission of air quality reports on behalf of each partner to DEFRA. The Air quality Annual Status Report (ASR) provides a detailed summary as to the status of existing air quality and emerging problem areas/improvement in each authority area. In other developments the team have begun planning additional air quality projects this year the first of which is the review of the 2013 Worcestershire Air Quality Action Plan and the submission of a DEFRA grant seeking funding with the deployment of enhanced air quality monitoring across the County of which further detail will be provided at the next quarterly report. The procurement process for the Wychbold air monitoring station was completed in June and the successful supplier will be Enviro Technology (ET) of Stroud. It is anticipated that the next phase of installation will take place over the autumn and winter once street works consents are secured from the County Council.

Contaminated Land

WRS continue to work with the Environment Agency on the PFAS contamination concerns relating to the old fire station site in Windsor Street, Bromsgrove. Officers are currently reviewing a significant status report and appraisal undertaken by Jacobs on behalf of the Environment Agency which was commissioned in 2021. It is anticipated that the Environment Agency will be making a decision in the autumn as to whether the site will require further investigation with regard to potential off-site contamination due to the characteristics of the PFAS pollutant.

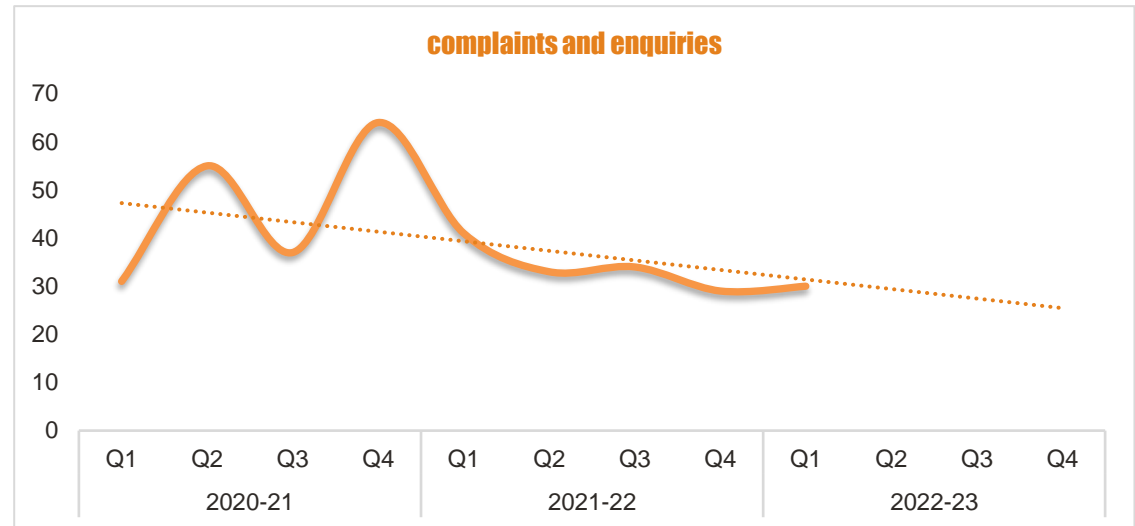
Dog Control

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 one is an increase of 18% compared to 2021-22, but an increase of 22% compared to 2020-21. Approximately 72% of cases related to 'contained' stray dogs; which means that a dog was found and held by, for example, a member of the public. Overall, 68% of contained strays were reunited with their owners, however, figures vary significantly between local authorities.

The dog warden service has seen an increase in strays throughout the summer, the number creeping up higher than we have seen over the past 3 years. The wardens, kennels and rescues are all extremely busy and operating at full capacity. The service continues to look after a client dog that we have been looking after since February 2022 as well as two dogs for a client who remains in hospital long term. We are seeing an increase in requests for handovers where people can no longer care for their pets which is likely linked to the cost of living crisis and post-COVID behaviour changes.

In general terms, WRS receives a low number of dog control complaints. Based on the 9 complaints recorded, 6 related to fouling and persistent straying, 3 related to welfare concerns, and a single complaint related to a dangerous dog.



Environmental Permitting

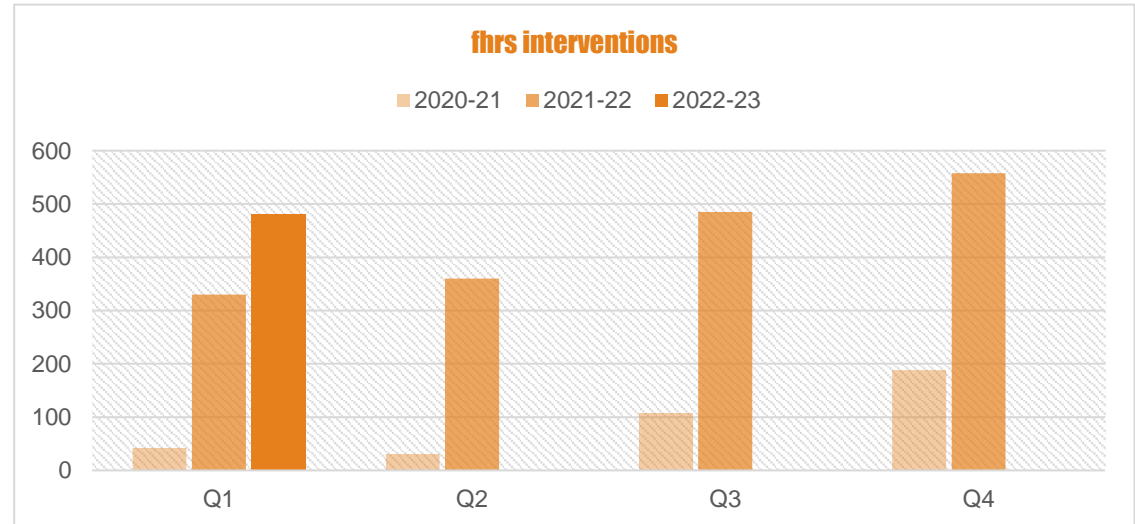
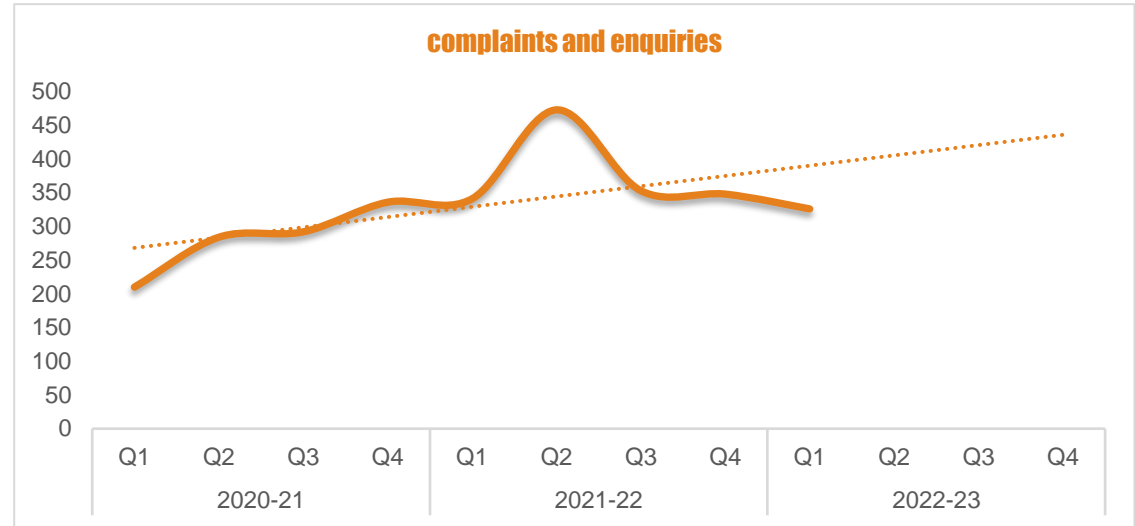
Officers have commenced this year's programme of inspections and have been happy with the level of compliance to date. Whilst this remains high in this sector several companies are currently being pursued for technical breaches or operating without permit located in the Malvern Hills & Wychavon Districts. In other work officers are assisting companies with their PRTR waste returns that are reported annually to DEFRA.

Food Safety

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 one is a reduction of 4% compared to 2021-22, but an increase of 55% compared to 2020-21. In general terms, a higher proportion of food safety cases are enquiries such as requests for business advice or export health certificates. Based on the 144 complaints recorded, 84% related to issues with products purchased from food businesses, whilst 16% related to poor hygiene standards and practices.

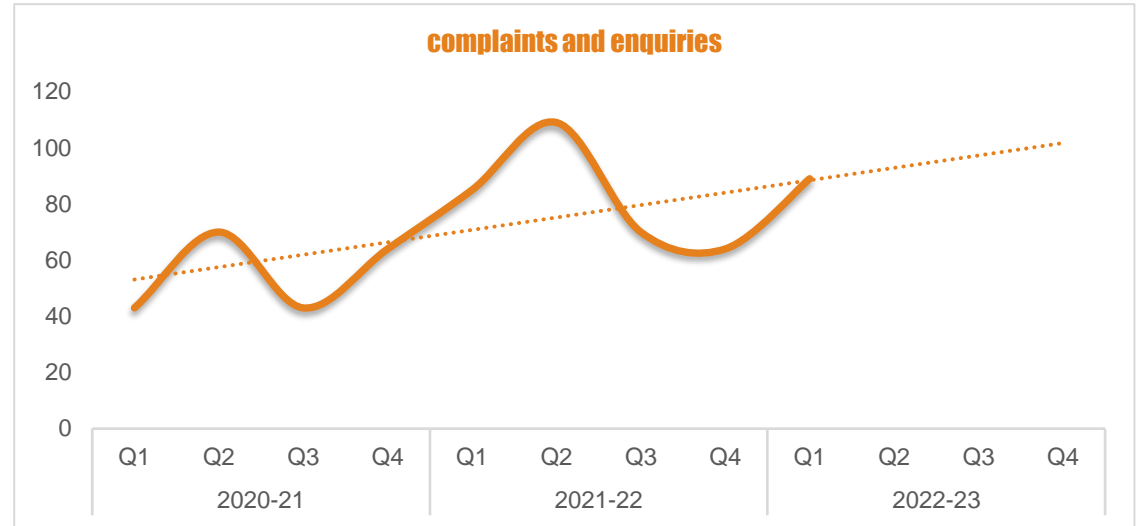
Of the 481 interventions conducted at businesses included in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS), 7 were rated as non-compliant (0, 1 or 2) with most of these ratings issued to hospitality businesses.



Health and Safety

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.

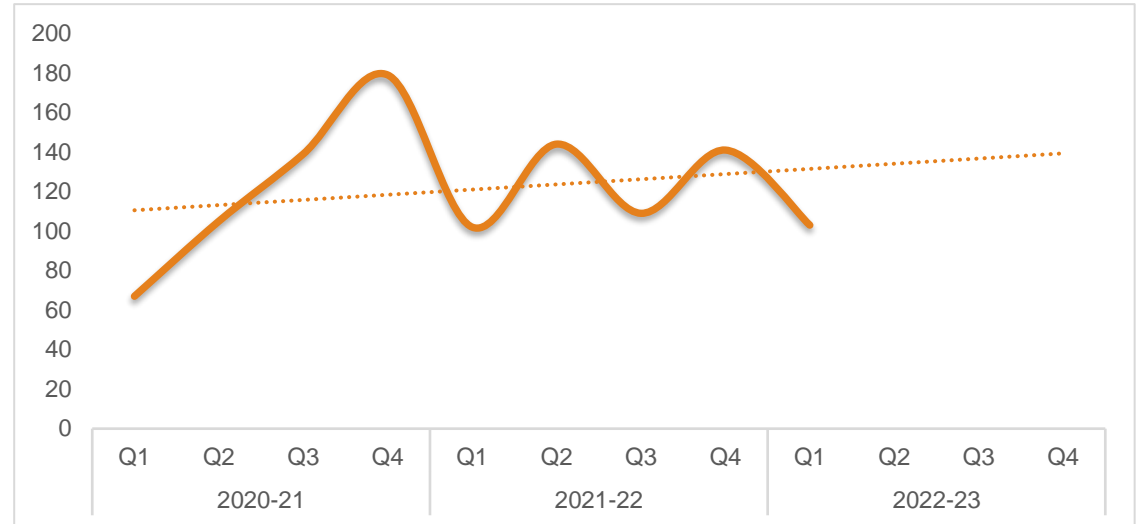
The number of health and safety cases recorded by WRS during quarter one is consistent with 2021-22, but an increase of 42% compared to 2020-21. Approximately 34% of cases were reports of accidents, with 50% relating to injuries where a worker was incapacitated for more than seven days and 28% relating to injuries to members of the public. The remaining cases were either accidents where major injuries were sustained, dangerous occurrences, and two fatalities. Slips, trips, and falls continues to be the prominent cause of accidents.



Information Requests

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

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



Licensing

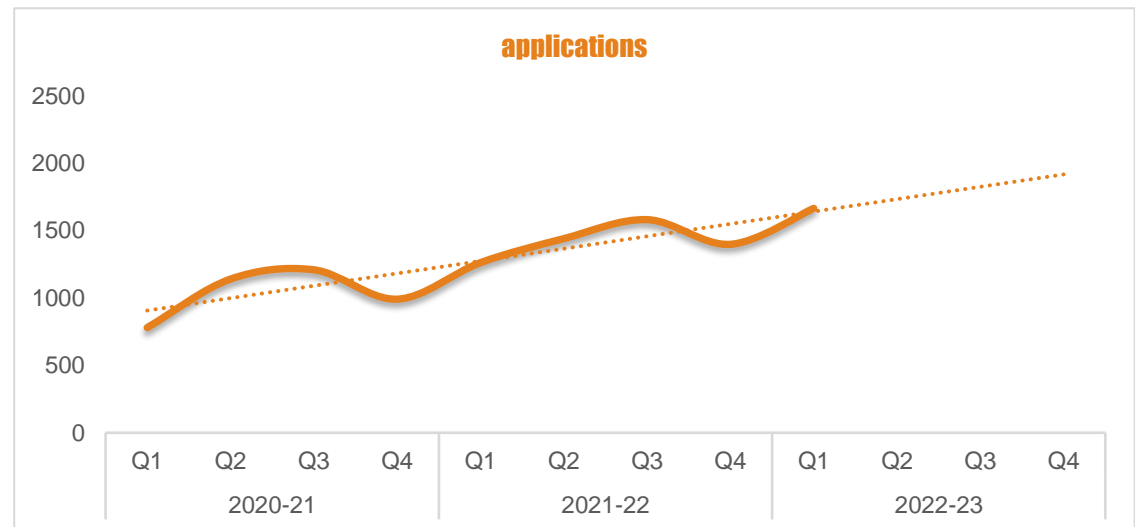
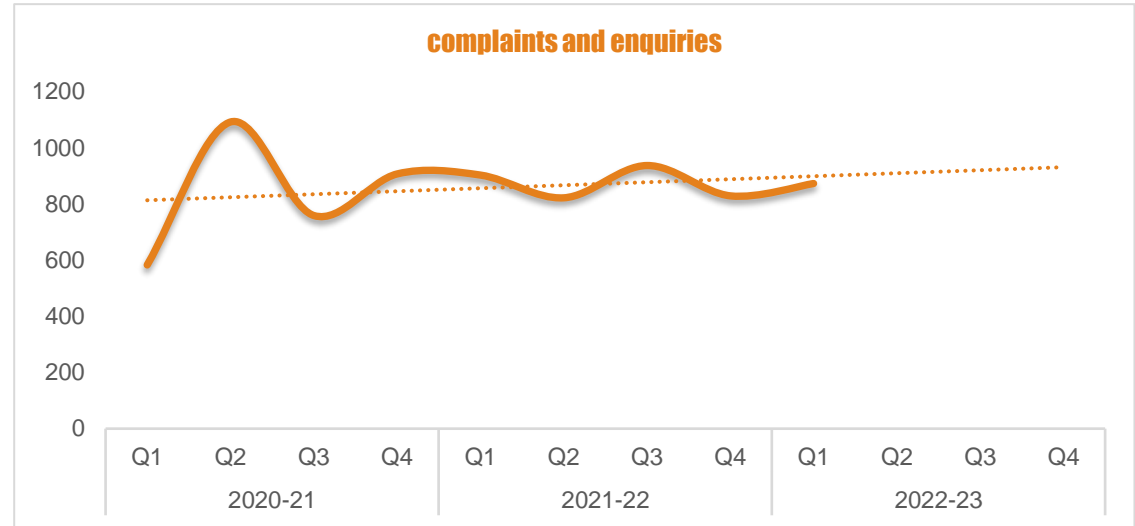
The chart (top right) shows the number complaints and enquiries recorded by WRS over a three year period relating to licensing. The chart (bottom right) shows the number of licensing applications.

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 one is an increase of 17% compared to 2021-22, but a n increase of 86% compared to 2020-21. It should be noted, however, that there were significantly fewer licensing applications recorded two years ago due to COVID restrictions and the closure of many hospitality premises. Approximately 66% of cases recorded during quarter one were applications and registrations; with 33% relating to temporary events, 25% relating to private hire or hackney carriage vehicle licences, and 13% relating to 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 152 complaints recorded during quarter one, 32% related to taxi licensing, 26% related to alcohol licensing, and 21% related to animal licensing.



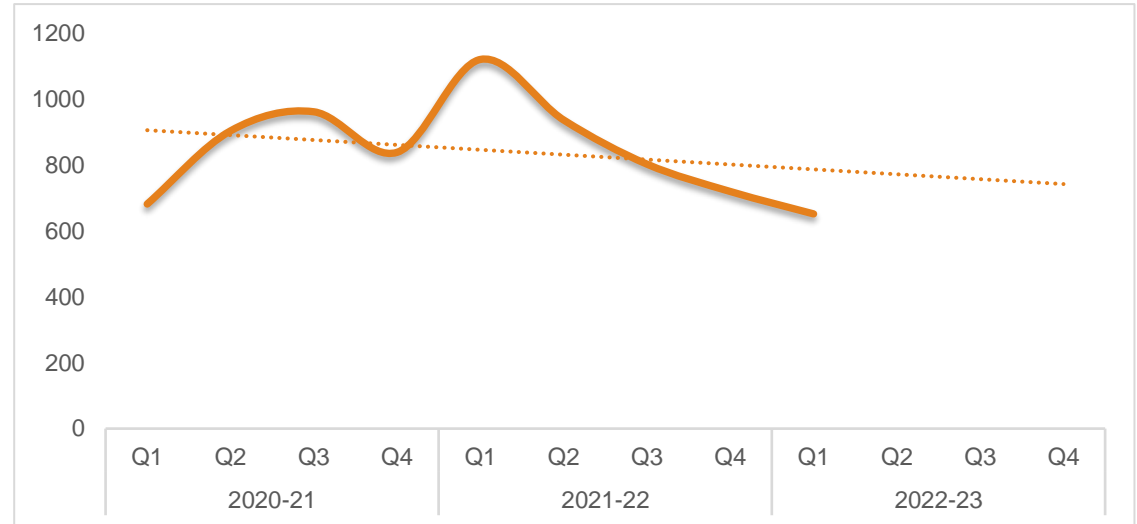
Planning

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

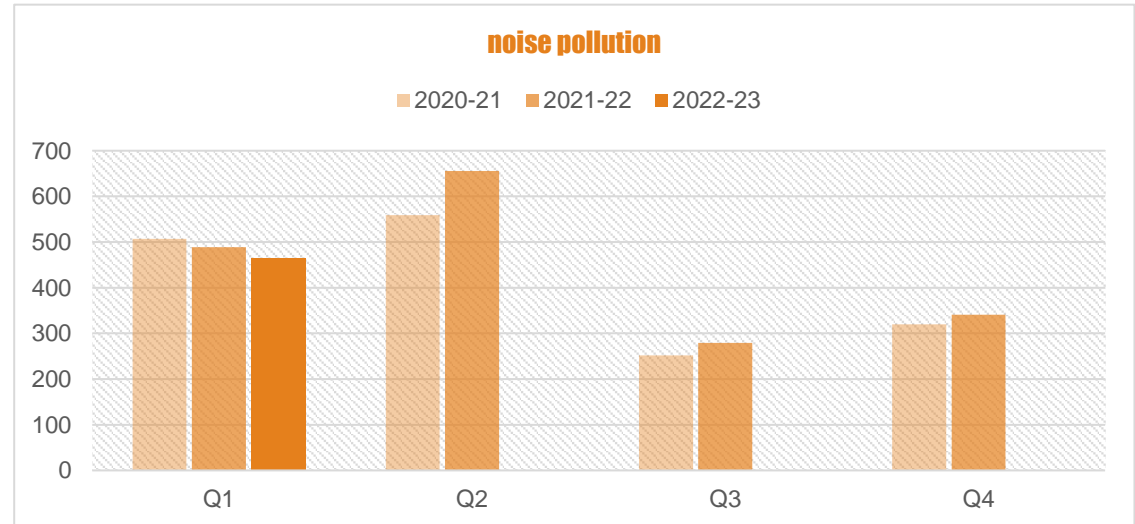
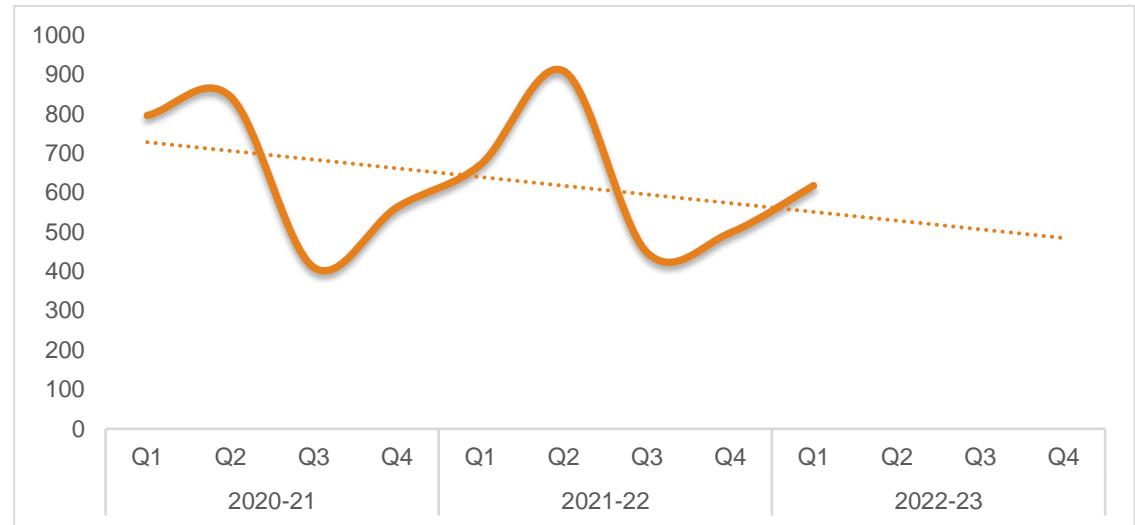
The number of planning enquiries completed by WRS during quarter one is a reduction of 42% compared to 2021-22, but a reduction of 4% compared to 2020-21. Approximately 90% of enquiries were consultations, whilst 50% related to contaminated land. Around a fifth of planning enquiries were completed, on a contractual basis, on behalf of other local authorities.



Pollution

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.

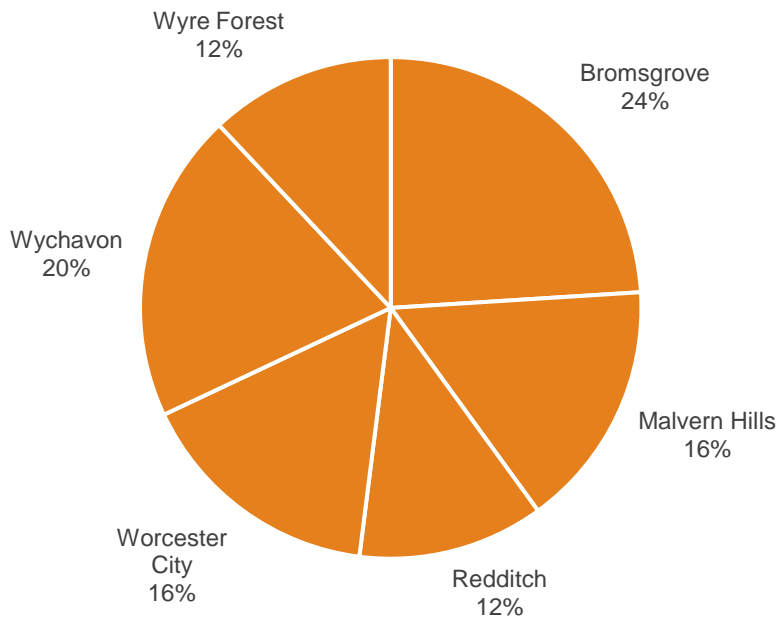
The number of pollution cases recorded by WRS during quarter one is a reduction of 8% compared to 2021-22, but a reduction of 22% compared to 2020-21. It should be noted, however, that the increased number of cases two years ago coincides with COVID-19 restrictions and a greater number of residents being at home. It also should be noted that totals are in line with seasonal variations. Approximately 75% of cases related to noise nuisances, with noise from domestic properties (such as from dog barking or noise from audio-visual equipment) the most prominent sources. A further 11% of cases related to smoke nuisances and issues such as the burning of domestic or commercial waste.



Noise

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.

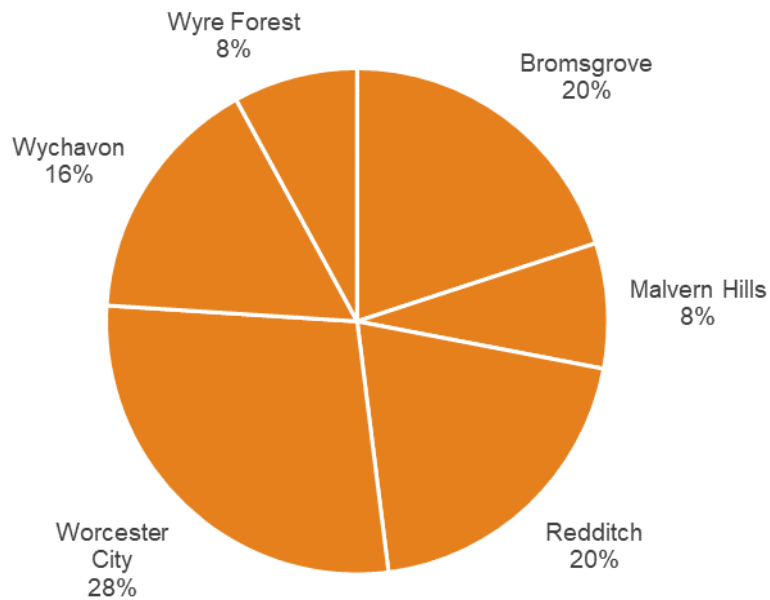


Ward	Total	Population	Rate
Ombersley	6	2,420	2.48
Marlbrook	7	2,890	2.42
Perryfields	3	1,501	2.00
Lowes Hill	5	2,903	1.72
Droitwich South West	8	4,969	1.61
Warndon	9	5,669	1.59
Teme Valley	3	1,964	1.53
Wythall East	4	2,978	1.34
Arboretum	8	6,233	1.28
Alvechurch South	4	3,131	1.28
Offmore And Comberton	12	9,664	1.24
Church Hill	10	8,062	1.24
Headless Cross And Oakenshaw	10	8,295	1.21
Drakes Broughton	3	2,577	1.16
Droitwich West	6	5,279	1.14
Alfrick And Leigh	4	3,590	1.11
Wribbenhall And Arley	6	5,444	1.10
Bedwardine	9	8,167	1.10
Rainbow Hill	6	5,511	1.09
Link	7	6,438	1.09
Priory	5	4,636	1.08
Catshill North	3	2,846	1.05
Matchborough	6	6,054	0.99
Bretforton And Offenham	3	3,054	0.98
Areley Kings And Riverside	8	8,315	0.96

Noise (2021-22)

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.



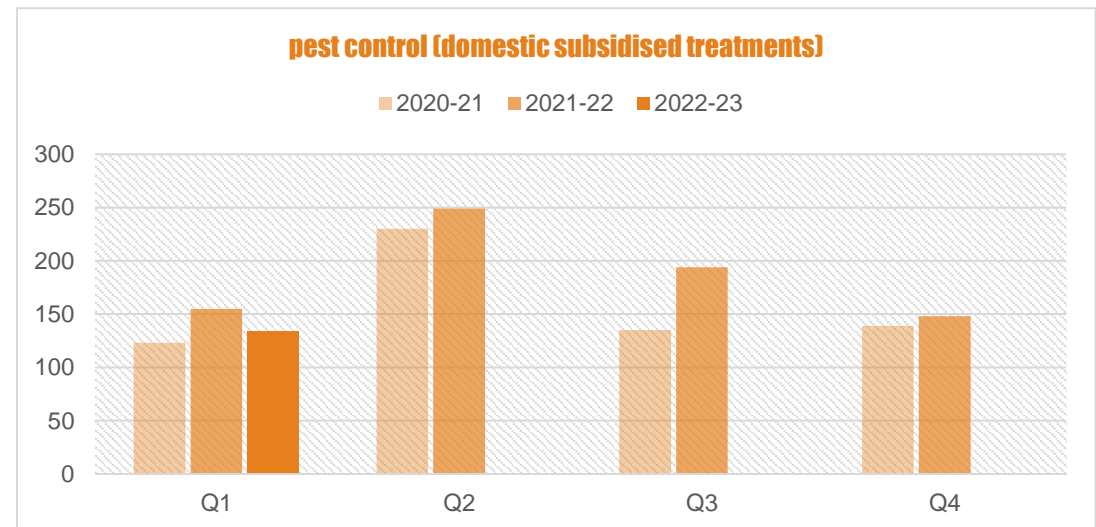
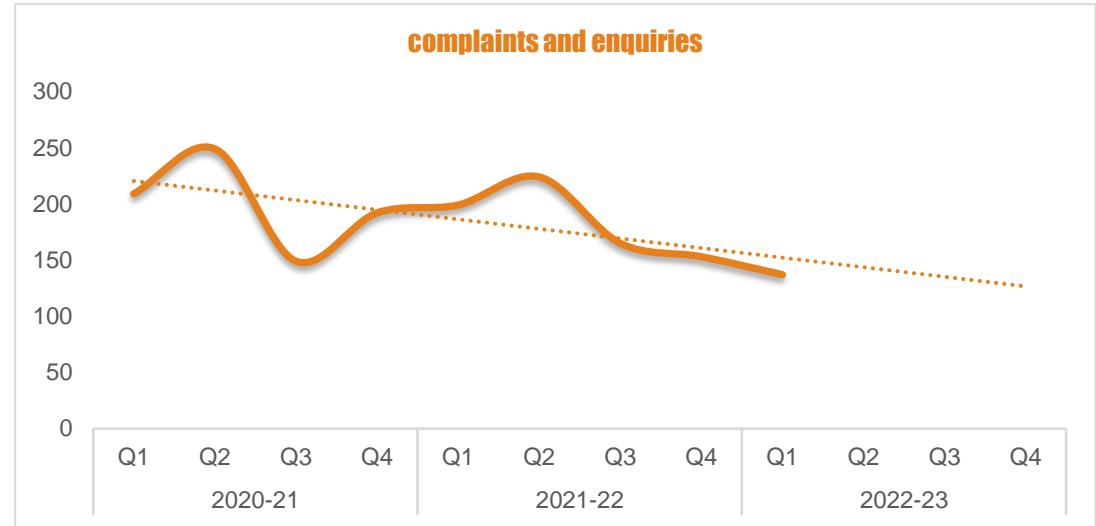
Ward	Total	Population	Rate
Eckington	22	2,669	8.24
Sanders Park	22	3,651	6.03
Norton	20	3,707	5.40
Marlbrook	14	2,890	4.84
Bedwardine	36	8,167	4.41
Harvington And Norton	12	2,756	4.35
Pinvin	13	3,105	4.19
Arboretum	25	6,233	4.01
Batchley And Brockhill	34	8,783	3.87
Rainbow Hill	21	5,511	3.81
Cathedral	43	11,763	3.66
Greenlands	33	9,329	3.54
Headless Cross And Oakenshaw	28	8,295	3.38
Perryfields	5	1,501	3.33
Winyates	27	8,184	3.30
Claines	26	8,076	3.22
Warndon	18	5,669	3.18
Link	20	6,438	3.11
Drakes Broughton	8	2,577	3.10
Church Hill	25	8,062	3.10
Avoncroft	10	3,300	3.03
Mitton	30	10,047	2.99
Gorse Hill	17	5,839	2.91
Wyre Forest Rural	26	9,106	2.86
Priory	13	4,636	2.80

Public Health

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 of public health cases recorded by WRS during quarter one is a reduction of 31% compared to 2021-22, but a reduction of 34% compared to 2020-21. Approximately 66% of cases related to pest control; whether enquiries about domestic treatments and sewer baiting, or complaints about pest control issues caused by the activity of neighbouring residents or businesses. A further 23% of cases were complaints relating to accumulations at domestic properties which can also include pest control issues.

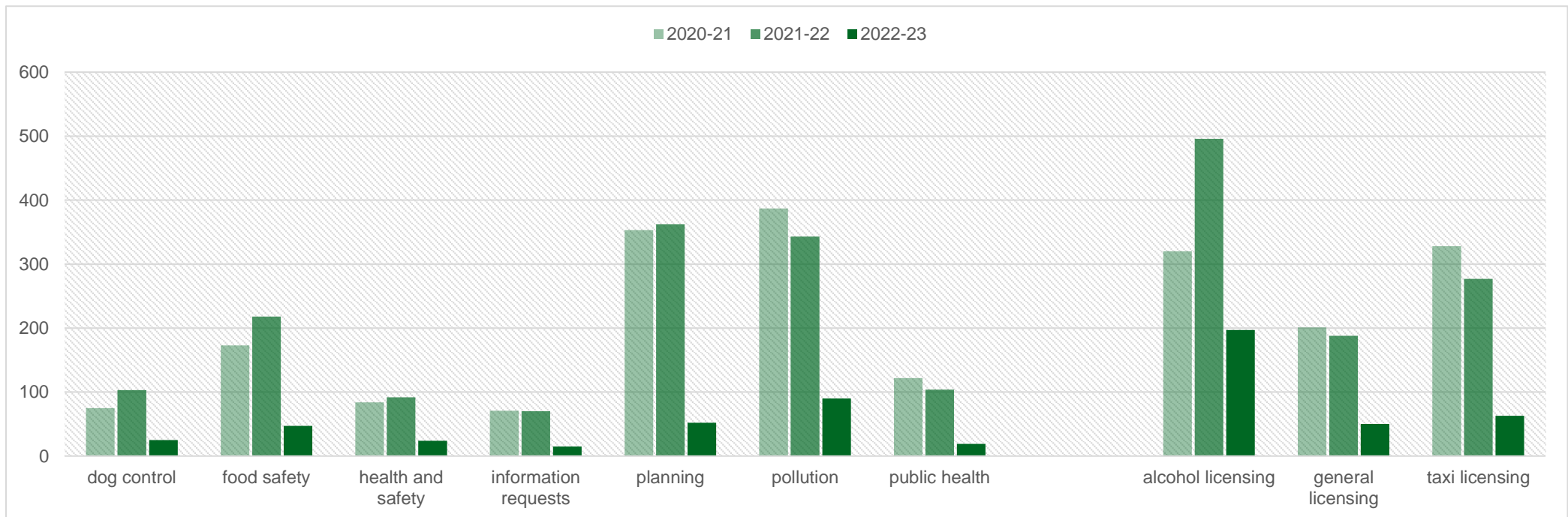
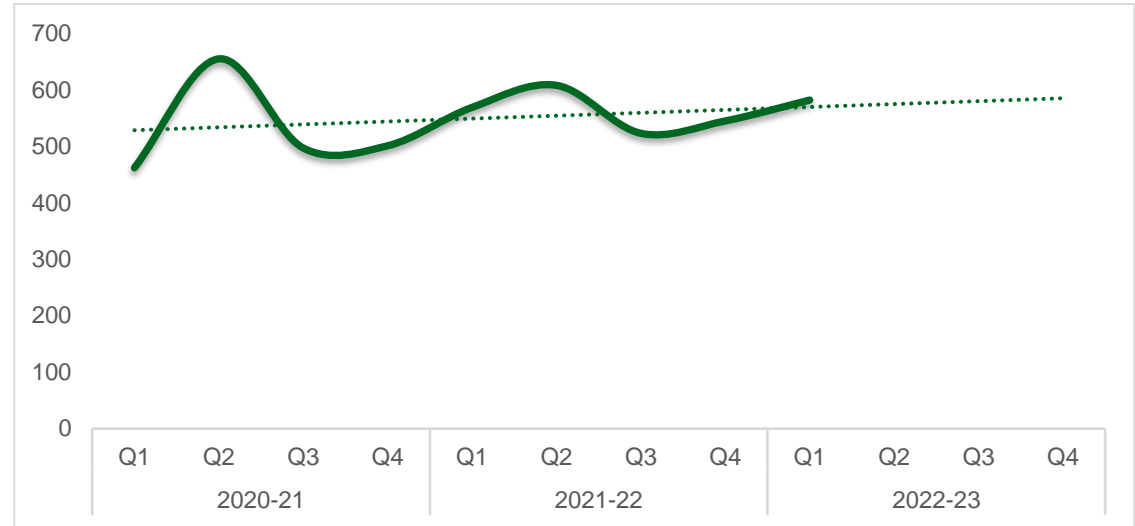
Of the 134 domestic treatments undertaken during quarter one, approximately 70% were due to issues with rats and 38% were due to pests at properties within the Wychavon district.



Bromsgrove

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.

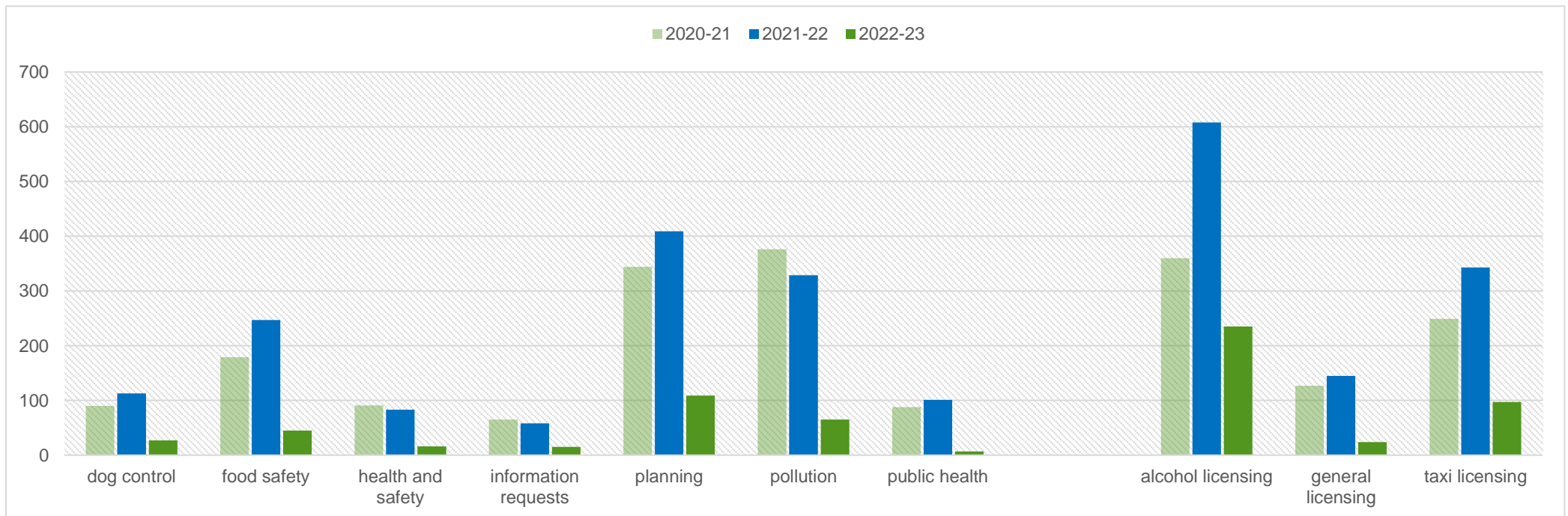
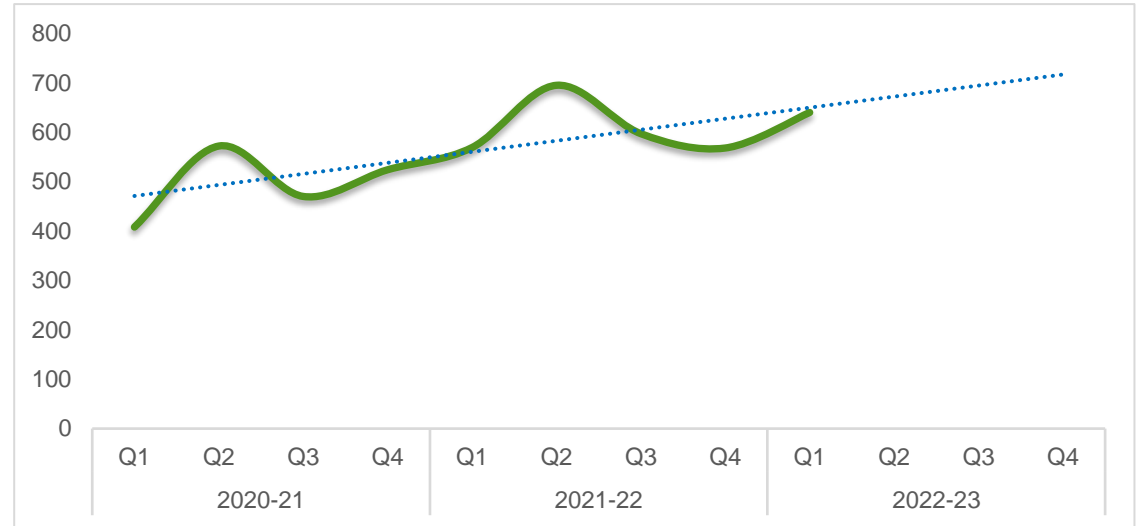
Note: The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The figure for the current year is a cumulative total based on each of the reporting periods. This figure will continue to increase until the end of year report is published.



Malvern Hills

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.

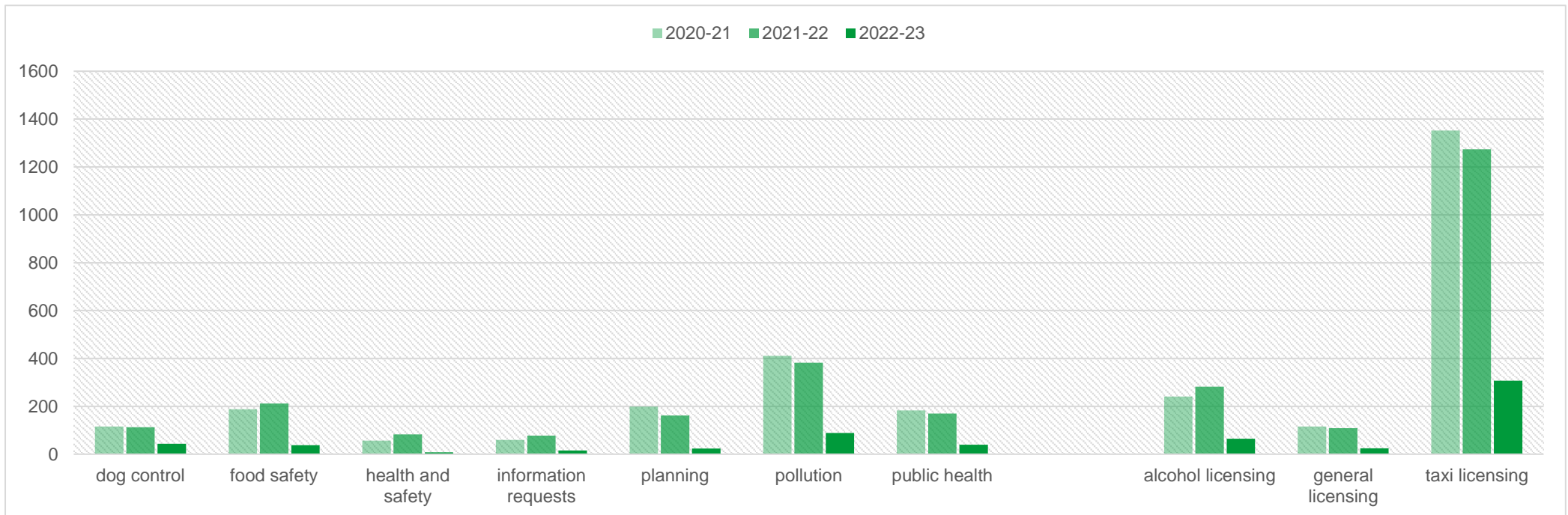
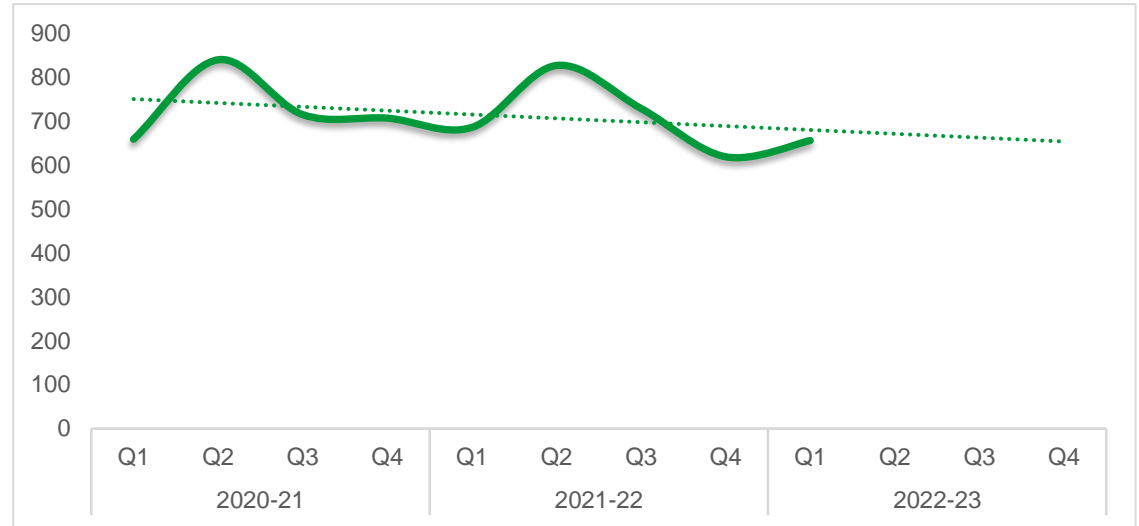
Note: The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The figure for the current year is a cumulative total based on each of the reporting periods. This figure will continue to increase until the end of year report is published.



Redditch

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.

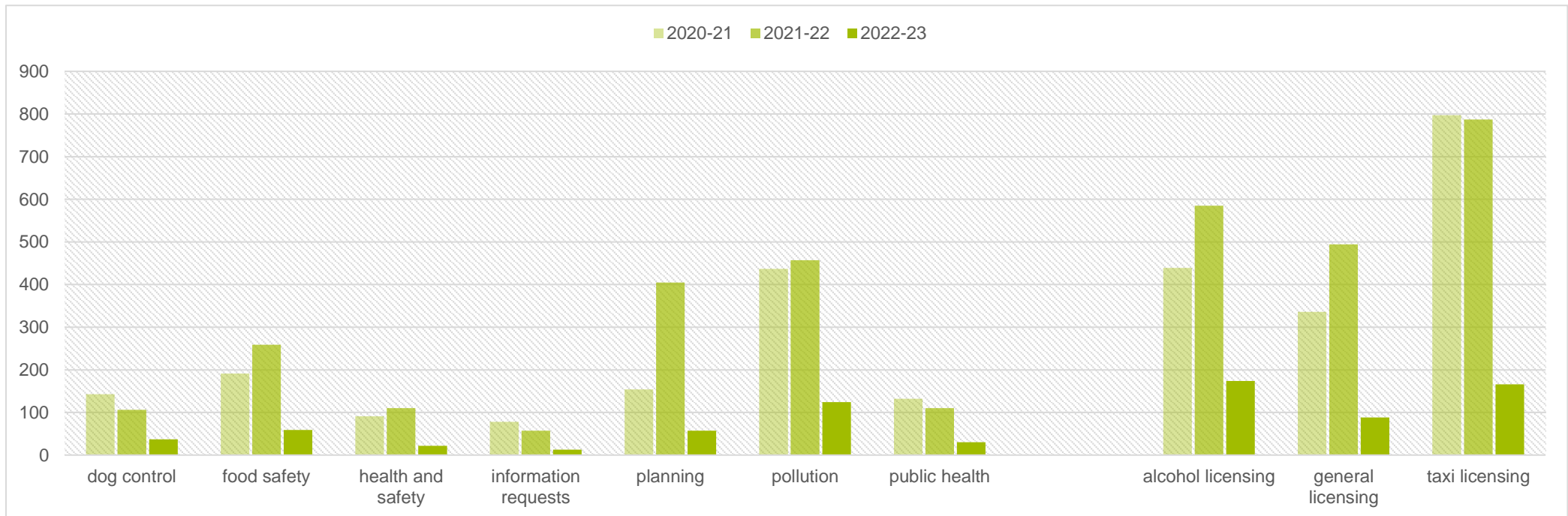
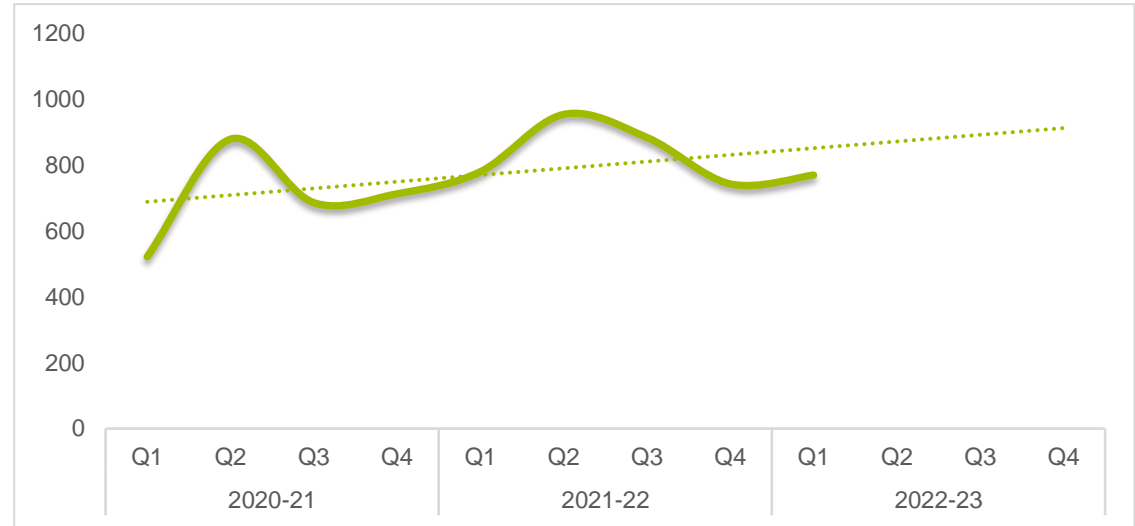
Note: The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The figure for the current year is a cumulative total based on each of the reporting periods. This figure will continue to increase until the end of year report is published.



Worcester City

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.

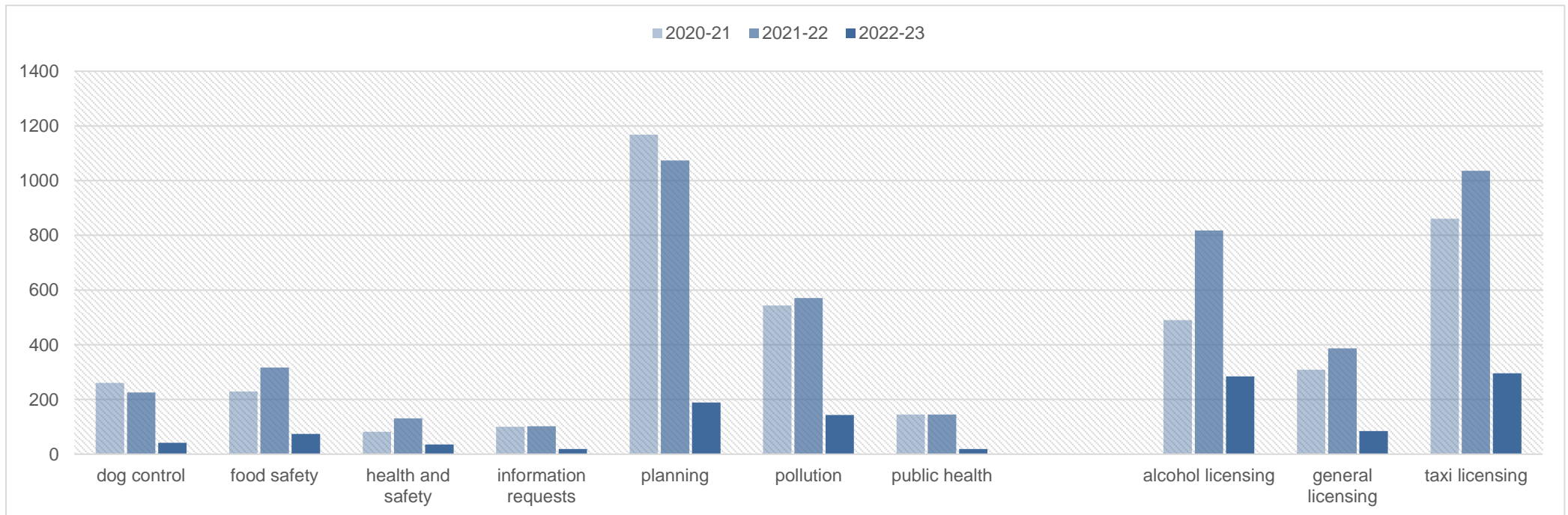
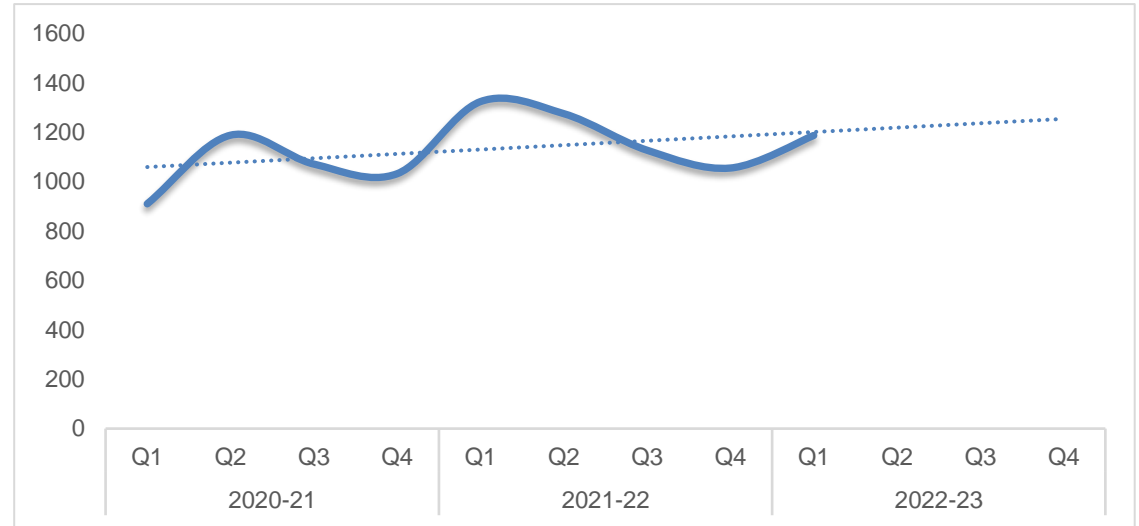
Note: The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The figure for the current year is a cumulative total based on each of the reporting periods. This figure will continue to increase until the end of year report is published.



Wychavon

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.

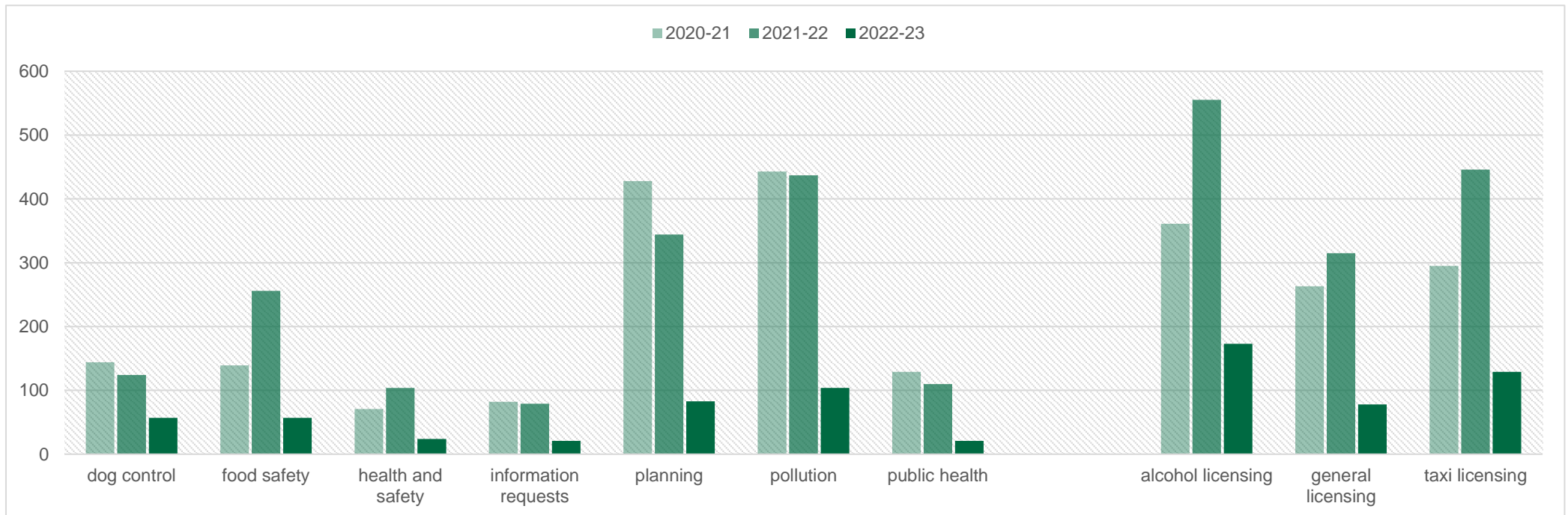
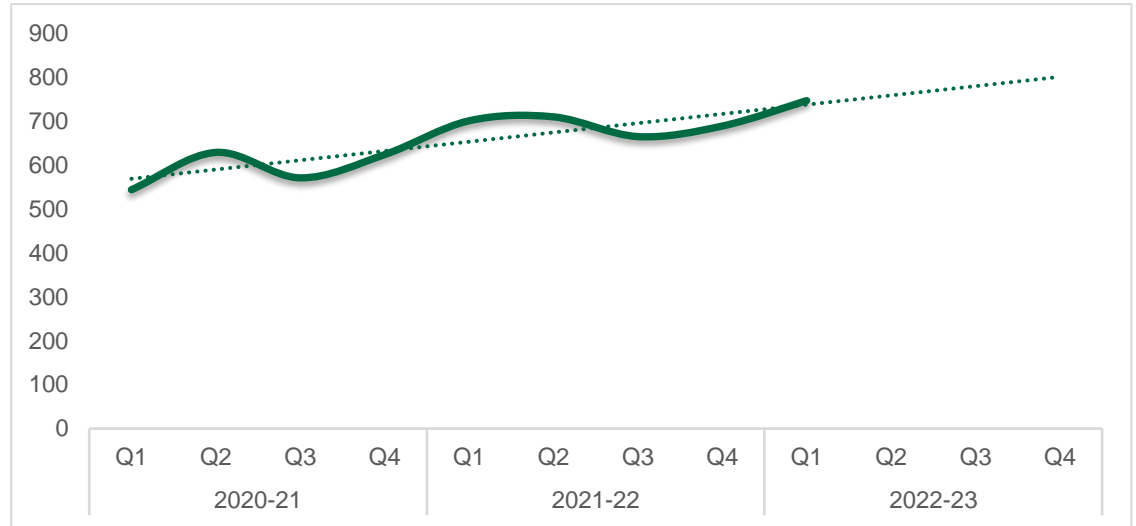
Note: The chart (below) shows the number of cases recorded against each of the main functions undertaken by WRS. The figure for the current year is a cumulative total based on each of the reporting periods. This figure will continue to increase until the end of year report is published.



Wyre Forest

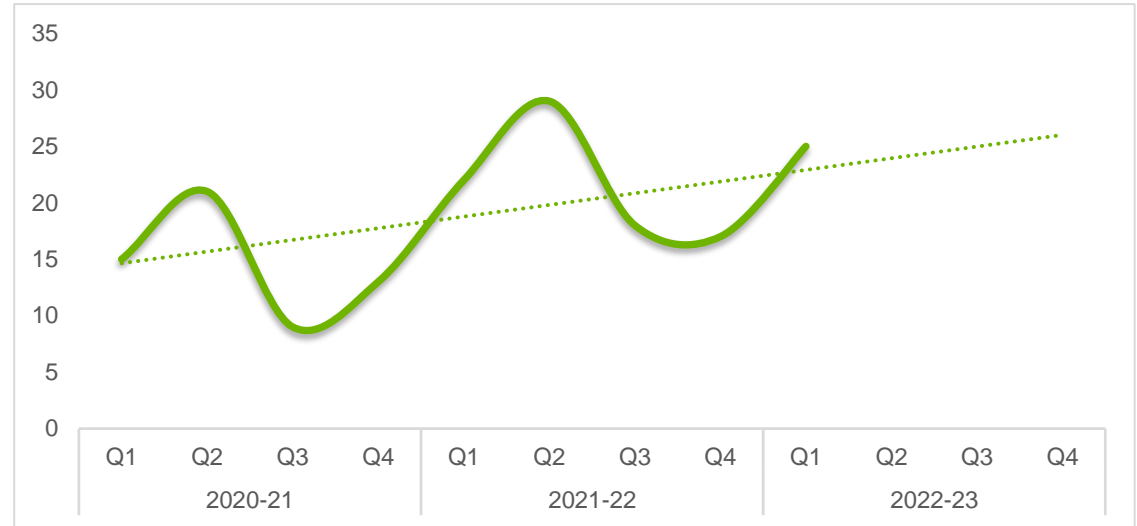
The data on this page relates to Environmental Health and Licensing cases (complaints, enquiries, applications and notifications) where the subject and/or enquirer were located within the Wyre Forest district.

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.



Cheltenham

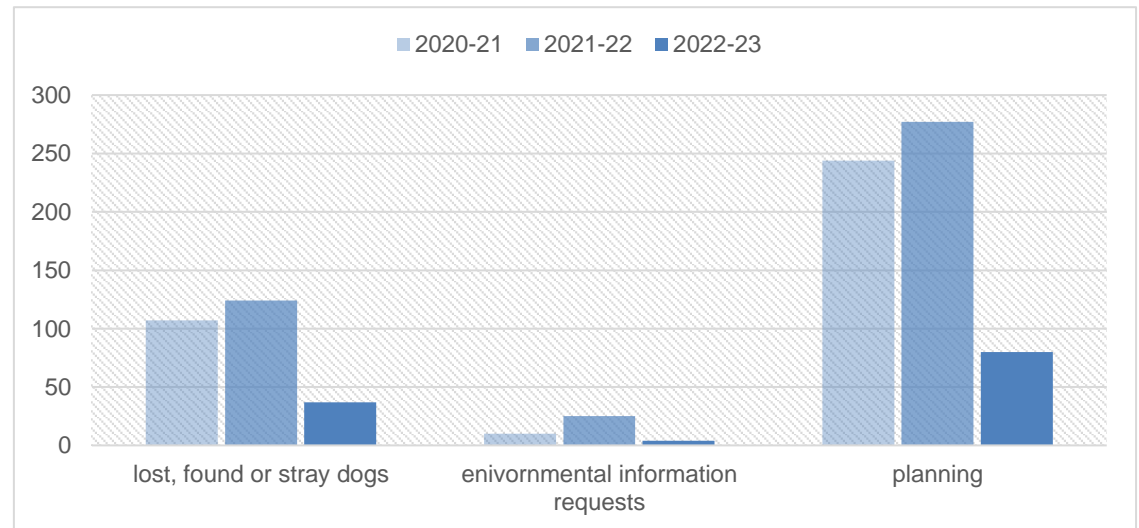
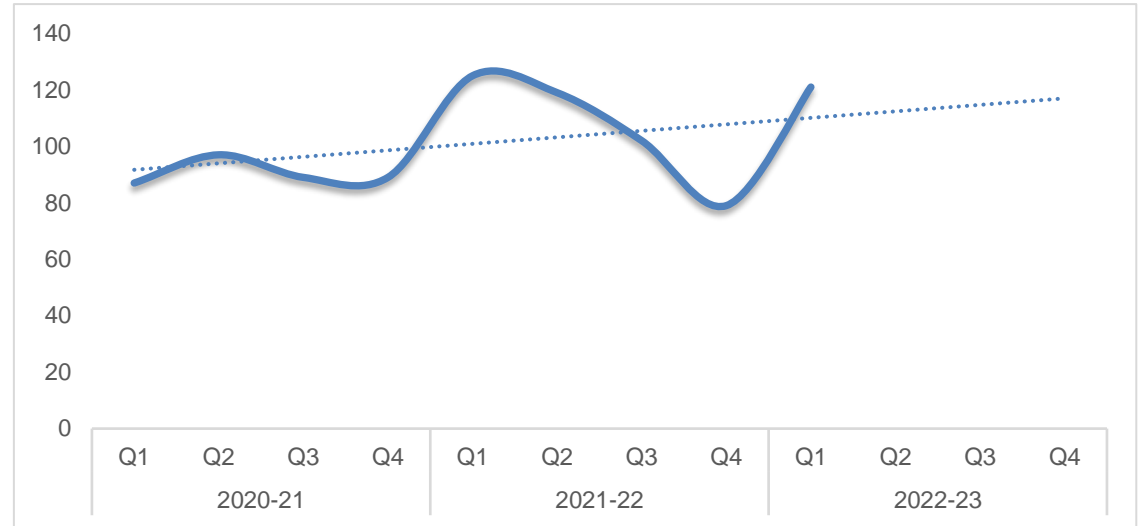
The dog control work undertaken for Cheltenham Borough Council is part of a contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was recently renewed and has been highly successful in reducing 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, however, this is being closely monitored as there have been recent increases in the number of abandoned strays due to the cost of living crisis and post-COVID behaviour changes.



Gloucester City

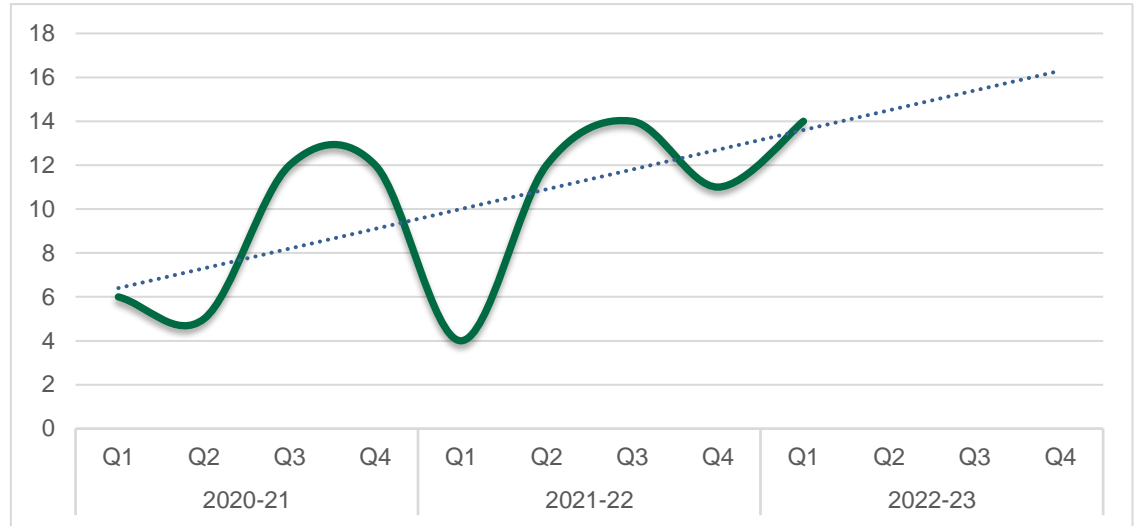
The dog control work undertaken for Gloucester City Council is part of a contract with two other Gloucestershire authorities to deliver the collection, kennelling, returning of dogs to owners and rehoming of stray dog functions. The contract was recently renewed and has been highly successful in reducing 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, however, this is being closely monitored as there have been recent increases in the number of abandoned strays due to the cost of living crisis and post-COVID behaviour changes.

In addition to dog control activity, the service continues to deal with environmental information requests and planning enquiries.



South Gloucestershire

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.



Tewkesbury

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, however, this is being closely monitored as there have been recent increases in the number of abandoned strays due to the cost of living crisis and post-COVID behaviour changes.

In addition to dog control activity, the service continues to deal with planning enquiries.

