

WRS Joint Board

Date: 25th June 2026

Title: Activity and Performance Data Quarters 1, 2 3 and 4 2025/26

Recommendation

That the Joint 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 2025/6, but the actual data allows comparison with previous quarters and previous years.

Contribution to Priorities

Joint 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 number of dog control cases received during the year represented an increase of 5% compared to last year and an increase of 13% compared to 2023/24. It was the busiest year for the team of the last three.

Most cases were reports of lost or stray dogs with most being "contained strays," so the dog being found and held by a member of the public. Around 18% of dogs assessed had welfare concerns and as outlined in previous reports, there has been a concerning increase in these types of cases over the past few years. Approximately 42% of dogs were successfully reunited with their owners, across all the Councils we support with this work, however, this figure varies significantly between local authorities. The average across the Worcestershire authorities is approximately 50%.

The service receives a modest number of dog control complaints and enquiries each quarter. Of the 84 complaints received during the year, 67 related to dog fouling and/or dogs that were persistently straying from residential properties.

The overall number of food safety cases received during the year was an increase of 14% higher than each of the past 2-years. The majority of contacts for the service are enquiries, including requests for business

advice. However, of the 522 actual complaints received during the year, 73% related to issues with food products such as poor-quality food or food containing a foreign object, whilst 27% related to poor hygiene standards or practices at food businesses.

Based on the 1,727 FHRs food hygiene interventions undertaken during the year, around 5% resulted in businesses being rated as "non-compliant" (issued a rating of 0, 1, or 2). Most low scores continue to occur in the hospitality sector (such as takeaways and restaurants) or small retailers. To find out more about food hygiene ratings, please visit <https://ratings.food.gov.uk>

The overall number of health and safety cases received during the year was slightly higher than the previous 2-years. Just under half of cases were reports of accidents in workplaces with most cases relating to injuries where a worker was incapacitated for more than seven days or injuries to members of the public. Slips, trips, and falls remain the greatest cause of workplace accidents. Sadly, the service has investigated three fatalities that were reported during the year.

The overall number of licensing cases fell last year by 4% compared to last year and 8% compared to 2023/24. Just over two-thirds of cases were applications or registrations and, as would be expected, the most common types submitted to the service relate to temporary events (23%), private hire vehicles (18%) and hackney carriage vehicles (11%).

Licensing continues to receive more enquiries such as queries about regulations, by-laws, and licence conditions etc, than complaints about license holders or licensed premises. Of the 1076 complaints received this year, approximately 43% related to taxi licensing (such as reports of poor driver behaviour, unauthorised parking, or poor driving standards,) and 28% related to alcohol licensing (reports of business failing to comply with the licensing objectives). A further 11% of complaints related to animal licensing with most cases relating to the unlicensed breeding and/or sale of dogs.

Planning enquires fell by 5% compared to last year but remained 18% above the number in 2023/24. Approximately 94% of enquiries were consultations for air quality, contaminated land, or nuisances; whilst approximately 1 in 5 enquiries were processed (on a contractual basis) on behalf of other local authorities

After peaking in Q3, at the highest in any one quarter for the past 3-years, the number of information requests (EIR/FOI) fell back slightly in Q4, but overall the number during the year was again significant. We often see these requests, EIRs in particular, linked to planning work, but this is not always the case.

There is currently no comparable temporal data available for the planning enforcement and enviro-crime functions as the service has only been delivering these functions since June 2024. Of the 1114 cases recorded during the year, around 69% related to fly-tipping incidents whilst 32% were complaints about suspected breaches of planning legislation at residential or commercial properties.

From an environmental crime perspective, it should be noted that the number of cases we mention here is the number picked up for investigation

by the service. During the year, approximately 2,225 fly-tipping incidents were reported to Bromsgrove District Council whilst 1,842 incidents were reported to Redditch Borough Council. Where an incident is not investigated, this is commonly because there is no possible means for the service to identify a suspect and/or because insufficient information was supplied via the reporting form.

The overall number of pollution cases received during the year was 16% up compared to last year but 7% lower than in 2023/24. One might have expected the incredibly hot summer to yield significantly larger number of nuisance cases as people have their windows open more, even at night, but this did not occur. Just over 90% of cases were allegations of potential statutory nuisances, with 42% of cases relating to noise from residential properties such as noise from barking dogs or audio-visual equipment. Other sources of potential nuisance came from the types of premises previously reported including hospitality.

The number of public health cases, which have a similar legislative basis as nuisance, received during the year was broadly comparable to last year but and slightly down on 2023/24. Around half of the cases received related to pest control and were enquiries about domestic treatments, sewer baiting, or complaints about pest activity caused by the actions of neighbouring residents or businesses. A further 27% of cases were reports of accumulations at residential properties, however, such complaints often reference the presence of rodents or other pests.

Of the 515 domestic treatments undertaken by pest control contractors during the year, just over half were due to problems with rats, whilst a further 24% were due to issues with wasps or hornets. Around two thirds of treatments took place at properties in the Redditch or Wychavon districts.

Homes for Ukraine

Support has continued to be provided to Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils with the provision of the Homes for Ukraine scheme. This has involved host and guest checks, support and guidance as well as facilitating appropriate payments. More details are provided in the Annual Report.

Performance

The year saw another unexpected drop in business satisfaction from above 95% to 93.2. The non-business customer measure closed at 57.1% compared to 56.7%, 60.4% and 59.2% respectively in the last 3 years.

More detail on these is contained in the Annual Report. With non-business customers, resources to address nuisance complaints continue to be stretched during the Summer. Managers will continue to look at how to improve performance in several areas and continue to try to manage public expectations around what is achievable with nuisance issues as many of these will never be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant. Response rates were low again this year with only 109 responses, compared to 104, 161 and 138 in the previous 2 years, none of which are good. Literally hundreds of requests for responses (over 700 to non-business and several thousand to business,) using a mix of

digital and paper questionnaires were sent out, but it is very difficult to get replies. For the business measure only 170 customers responded compared to over 200 last year. In better scoring years we would expect 200-250 responses from non-business customers and perhaps beyond 300 in a good year from businesses. Managers will now look at a completely different way to get feedback, but even then, with everyone feeling overloaded with requests from every supplier that we use and from every delivery firm that brings good to our doors, it may be harder to get back to statistically valid levels of return. Clearer communication and officers maintaining agreed contact intervals with complainants may help improve this situation and, while we will never achieve total satisfaction because of the nature of our work, we know we can do better than this.

People who felt better equipped to deal with issues ended the year at 42.9%, well below the figure in the recent past (53.4, 56.6%, 57%, and 58.5%,) but it should be noted that a low score here invariably accompanies a low overall satisfaction score.

The figures for licensing processing are slightly below last year's 97.5%, at 92.8% of taxi driver renewals completed within 5 working days of having a full application. A poor start to the year could not be made up for with improvements in the second half of the year. The number of vehicles suspended is lower than in the last 5 years at 45, compared to 54, 70, 84 and 59 respectively. As members will see from the details in the appendix, much of this is still driven by a single fleet. Members should also note that the testing regime does vary to some extent between partners. Failure rates may reflect the current economic climate, with cost-of-living pressures continuing to impact on members of the trade. However, members should remember that the safety of the travelling public is paramount in their role as the licensing authority.

Numbers of compliments are down on previous years, to the extent that the ratio to complaints is only just over 2:1 this year. Many compliments and thank you notes were captured from the returned questionnaires, so this is the reason why this has fallen.

Staff sickness is up again at 6.05 days per FTE, compared with 4.31, 3.07, and 2.93 days in the last 3 years. A significant proportion of this year's sickness is long-term (more than 28 days,) and relates to a very small number of officers who have had to deal with serious illness. They have now either left the organisation or are beginning phased return to work.

Staff satisfaction was 96.5%, higher than last year and a good result given the pressures. 57 of our staff responded, which was slightly down on last year, and over 73% of staff who responded scored the service as 8/10 or better to work for, which shows most staff do like working in the environment we provide. Further work will be done during the year to look at more detailed feedback for the staff.

The proportion of businesses licensed under the 2003 Act (alcohol and entertainment) being alleged to not uphold the 4 licensing objectives is

about average in all districts bar one this year. Only Bromsgrove's figure is above the average compared to its previous figures, so, despite the record-breaking summer heat, where people were having their windows open for longer, perhaps they were less worried by noise from licensed premises. This measure looks at allegations regarding breaches of the objectives, so this is not a proportion undermining the objectives. Although residents may not like what a pub is doing, it is not always the case that their activities contravene what is required. We have previously explained to members that, after pandemic lockdowns where hospitality premises were closed for long periods, the general tolerance of noise and similar activities from this type of premise seemed to have reduced. Hence, as these businesses sought other activities and uses of their outside spaces to increase revenue, residents living in the vicinity became unhappy with the changes. The data still shows that most premises across the County are well controlled by their operators, with issues arising from a minority.

The figures for the rate of noise complaints per 1000 heads of the population is up on last year, but only by a modest amount and the figures were still below the average this year compared to previous years. This is a little surprising as the good weather generally leads to increased nuisance cases, but it is not particularly reflected here.

Overall income was excellent with income from non-partner sources at over £650,000, which represents 21.7% of the budget from 2016/17, which we have used for comparison over the years, and over 15% of current net revenue.

Various pressures from salaries and inflation have driven up costs in recent years including increased staff numbers. Therefore, the cost per head of population is up this year at £6.89 per head of population. As we have said previously, it is difficult to compare our costs with others because of the way the service is delivered, however we are sure spending is comparable or modest compared to similar local authorities that are discharging these functions.

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 2025/6

Indicator	Report ing period	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4/ Outrun
1. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to customers satisfaction	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	53.8	61.7	59.6	57.1
2. % of service requests where resolution is achieved to business satisfaction	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	91.8	95.1	95.2	93.2
3. % businesses broadly compliant/ made compliant at first assessment/ inspection	Annually	98.3	Bromsgrove 98.3 Malvern Hills 98.1 Redditch 97.5 Worcester City 99.2 Wychavon 98.2 Wyre Forest 98.1 Worcestershire 98.3	98.5	Bromsgrove 98.6 Malvern Hills 98.3 Redditch 97.3 Worcester City 99.1 Wychavon 98.3 Wyre Forest 98.3 Worcestershire 98.4
4. % of food businesses scoring 0,1 or 2 at 1 st April each year	Annually	1.7	Bromsgrove 1.7 Malvern Hills 1.9 Redditch 2.5 Worcester City 0.8 Wychavon 1.8 Wyre Forest 1.9 Worcestershire 1.7	1.5	Bromsgrove 1.4 Malvern Hills 1.7 Redditch 2.7 Worcester City 0.9 Wychavon 1.7 Wyre Forest 1.7 Worcestershire 1.6
5 % of drivers licence renewal applications issued within 5 working days of receipt of a complete application	6-monthly	NA	88.4	NA	92.8
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	8/1551 or 0.5% of the fleet county-wide Vehicles found defective in service (suspended during the period) are: BDC 0 MHDC 0	1. NA	45/1551 or 2.9% of the fleet county-wide Vehicles found defective in service (suspended during the period) are: BDC 1

represents of the fleet county-wide			RBC 5 WCC 1 WDC 1 WFDC 1		MHDC 0 RBC 22 WCC 13 WDC 7 WFDC 1
7 % of service requests where customer indicates they feel better equipped to deal with issues themselves in future	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	42.9	57.8	51.3	47.1
8 Review of register of complaints/compliments	Quarterly NB: fig is cumulative	1/3	6/18	7/23	14/33
9 Annual staff sickness absence at public sector average or better	Quarterly NB: figure is cumulative	2.17 days per FTE	3.04 days per FTE	4.56 days per FTE	6.05 days per FTE
10 % of staff who enjoy working for WRS	Annually	NA	NA	NA	96.5
11 % of licensed businesses subject to allegations of not upholding the 4 licensing objectives	6-monthly	NA	Bromsgrove 6.8 Malvern Hills 3.5 Redditch 3.9 Worcester City 5.5 Wychavon 3.5 Wyre Forest 7.6 Worcestershire 5.1	NA	Bromsgrove 8.2% Malvern Hills 4.5% Redditch 5.2% Worcester City 8.3% Wychavon 4.8% Wyre Forest 7.6% Worcestershire 6.4%
12 Rate of noise complaint per 1000 head of population	6-monthly	NA	Bromsgrove 0.74 Malvern Hills 0.86 Redditch 0.61 Worcester City 0.86 Wychavon 0.72 Wyre Forest 0.80 Worcestershire 0.77	NA	Bromsgrove 1.98 Malvern Hills 1.91 Redditch 1.94 Worcester City 2.45 Wychavon 2.13 Wyre Forest 2.44 Worcestershire 2.17
13 Total income expressed as a % of district base revenue	6-monthly	NA	£347,337 which is 8.6% as a proportion of the 2016/17 revenue budget figure (£3,017,000) and 8.09% of current revenue budget (£4,293,000)	NA	£654,847 which is 21.7% as a proportion of the 2016/17 revenue budget figure (£3,017,000) and 15.4% of current revenue budget (£4,294,000)

budget (16/17)					
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 £4,227,369 against the County's most recent population estimate of 613680 in 2023, the service cost is: £6.89 per head