

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

13TH FEBRUARY 2020, AT 4.30 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors A. D. Kent, H. J. Jones, Raine, Wells, Grubb, King, Squires, Mrs. E. Stokes, Dyke and Dyke

APOLOGIES: Councillor D. Morris, Wychavon District Council

ABSENT: Councillor L. Griffiths, Worcester City Council

Partner Officers: Mr. P. Merrick, Malvern Hills District Council and Wychavon District Council, Mr. L. Griffiths, Worcester City Council

Officers: Mr. S. Wilkes, Ms. C. Flanagan, Mr C. Forrester, Ms. K. Goldey, Mr. M. Cox, Mr. D. Mellors, Ms K. Lahel and Mrs. J. Gresham

26/19 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Morris, Wychavon District Council. There were no substitute members present.

27/19 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

28/19 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD HELD ON 14TH NOVEMBER 2019**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 28th November 2019, were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 28th November 2019, be approved as a correct record.

Before the commencement of the meeting the Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services introduced a new officer member of the board, the Acting Licensing and Support Services Manager, who would be attending the Regulatory Services Board meetings going forward.

29/19

**WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES REVENUE
MONITORING APRIL - DEC 2019**

The Board considered the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Revenue Monitoring report, April to December 2019.

The Financial Services Manager, Bromsgrove District Council introduced the report and in doing so highlighted the detailed revenue report as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, showed a projected outturn 2019/2020 excess of £10k. WRS officers would continue to work on income generation and driving down expenditure in the financial year. The Financial Services Manager briefly explained that with the loss of PF22 the veterinary charges were less than anticipated with a £55k under spend.

The following questions were raised:-

- Councillor Kent, Bromsgrove District Council queried what equipment was included in the ICT refresh. WRS Officers explained that items that were required were laptop upgrades, provision of security patches, the support of Windows 10. These upgrades would ensure that by the end of the financial year the systems would be up to date and complaint. Officers from Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove district Councils undertook to find the details of the actual equipment spend of the ICT refresh.
- Councillor Jones, Bromsgrove District Council queried the 'Agency' budget line, as detailed on Appendix 1 to the report. The Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services explained that there would still be agency costs in order to back fill core posts.
- Councillor Kent, Bromsgrove District Council also queried 'the £66k projected outturn versus the £26k projected outturn variance spend'. The Head of WRS clarified that this was this was because WRS had identified a number of additional income sources. Members were pleased to hear that the new contract had been awarded

RESOLVED to

- a) Note the final financial position for the period April – Dec 2019

- b) That partner councils are informed of their liabilities for 2019-20 in relation to Bereavements

Council	Apr–Dec 19 Actual for Bereavements £000
Redditch Borough Council	5
Malvern Hills District Council	3
Worcester City Council	14
Bromsgrove District Council	8
Total	30

- c) That partner councils are informed of their liabilities for 2019-20 in relation to Pest Control

Council	Estimated Projected Outturn Recharge in Relation to Pest Control 2019/20 £000
Bromsgrove District Council	1
Redditch Borough Council	10
Wychavon District Council	8
Wyre Forest District Council	1
Total	20

- d) That partner councils are informed of their liabilities for 2019-20 in relation to three additional Technical Officers

Council	Estimated Projected Outturn 2019/20 Tech Officer Primary Authority £000	Estimated Projected Outturn 2019/20 Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Estimated Projected Outturn 2019/20 Tech Officer Gull Control £000
Redditch Borough Council	5	1	
Malvern Hills	4	9	

District Council			
Worcester City Council	5	3	27
Bromsgrove District Council	4	6	
Wychavon District Council	6	8	
Wyre Forest District Council	4	4	
Total	28	31	27

30/19

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2020-2023

The Board considered the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Business Plan 2020-2023 which was introduced by the Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS).

It was explained to Members that the Business Plan served a number of purposes that would inform the development of the service in the future. It was drawn to Members attention that there had been little clarity on Local Authority funding and that there was an ongoing lack of clarity. It was recognized that there was an added difficulty in that there were 6 partner councils on the WRS Board who all experienced their own levels of financial pressures.

The Head of WRS confirmed that income generation was the main focus for WRS going forward. It was made clear that clients of WRS were not necessarily looking for more services but more efficiency within the organisation. The Head of WRS explained that there was a need to create more income and the new Ministry of Defence contract was an example of the kind of work that will be undertaken in the future. The awarding of the contract had much to do with the experience of highly experienced, thoroughly trained and well thought of WRS officers.

The Head of WRS said that the Business Plan still contained potential options for partners to build other services into the WRS arrangement. He mentioned environmental health housing standards, enviro-crime and other enforcement related functions as being things that partners could consider adding as a means of creating efficiencies and possible savings but that clearly a business case would need to be made and considered by all partners. The Head of WRS reminded Members that WRS does have a reserve of £100k to protect the 6 partner councils in the event of funding difficulties.

The questions that were asked were as follows:

Councillor Kent, Bromsgrove District Council, questioned whether there could be key performance indicators added to the plan (page 27 of the Business Plan) as he was disappointed that there was still ongoing discussions regarding the website revamp and nothing had been actioned. He added that having 6 payment engines to receive payments through the website was untenable and that there needed to be a resolution that simplifies the way that customers make payments online. He also requested that officers provide a breakdown of the ICT costs that have already been incurred by the service.

The Head of WRS stated that there had been an ICT working group with the Executive Director Finance and Resources was involved in. However, it needed to be re-invigorated. WRS were working closely with the Finance teams at Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils to ensure that the new Finance IT system would interface with the WRS systems in order to work more effectively. Members acknowledged that this was encouraging however wanted it noted that there needed to be a resolution to the 6 payment systems that were currently in place. It was confirmed that Members would be informed of the timeframes as soon as they are known by WRS officers.

Councillor Stokes, Wychavon District Council asked exactly what WRS officers were doing to ensure that the £100k reserve would remain intact and it was confirmed by the Head of WRS that WRS were trying to broaden their services and their customers including other public bodies, such as hospitals. These kinds of contracts could include providing public services with frameworks for staff training.

Councillor Raine, Malvern District Council drew Members attention to the 'Picture of the plan' on page 28 of and questioned why 'cross skilling' was looked at separately and not as part of flexible working. The Head of WRS explained that cross skilling was important to stop WRS officers only being highly skilled in one area and ensuring that as well as having a specialism the officers had a broader range of skills in multiple areas.

Councillor Jones, Bromsgrove District Council questioned why, in the table on page 48 the 'Service provision complies with Government requirements'. The Head of WRS confirmed that the Food Standards Agency had audited the services and were very happy with the level of service provision.

Members requested an update on the ICT systems at the next meeting which officers confirmed they would provide to the Board.

RESOLVED to note the Business Plan 2020-2023

31/19

**WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES SERVICE PLAN
2020/21**

The Board considered the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Service Plan 2020/21 which was introduced by the Environmental Health & Trading Standards Manager Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS).

It was explained to Members that this was a high level plan which included some revised Performance Indicators as a result of the audit of the Food Standards Agency.

The following questions were asked:

Councillor Stokes, Wychavon District Council questioned whether WRS officers wore cameras when making food hygiene visits. It was confirmed by officers that none of the WRS officers wore any kind of body cameras for any of their duties.

Councillor Jones, Bromsgrove District Council, questioned whether there could be some target dates for the bullet points on page 57 regarding the 'realities of BREXIT'. The Head of WRS explained to Members that as a result of Brexit extra funding had been made available by the Chief Executives of the partner authorities as Government controls of the importation and exportation of food would now change that they would no longer be a part of the Single Market. These changes would affect approximately 100 businesses across Worcestershire and WRS would be working with these businesses.

The Head of WRS explained to Members that as the issues outlined on page 57 were ongoing there was little point to adding target dates as they are dependent on future income streams and needed a flexible approach.

Councillor Raine, Malvern District Council questioned the use of 'to assume' on page 65 and suggested that a more appropriate word would be 'be certain'. The Head of WRS confirmed that the use of word was as a result of the assumptions the public make when seeing five star ratings on establishments.

RESOLVED to note and approve the WRS Business Service Plan 2020/21

32/19

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES ACTIVITY & PERFORMANCE DATA - QUARTER 3

The Manager from WRS presented the report to the Board and noted the following:

- Food safety interventions were broadly in line with previous years.
- There had been 326 stray dogs reported which sadly included 4 welfare cases. One of these welfare cases involved a banned breed which resulted in the dog being put to sleep.
- In preparation for a 'No Deal Brexit' all food exporters in the county were contacted and contingency plan put in place where needed.
- WRS had worked with West Midlands Safari Park and carried out a test exercise in order to test their emergency plan.
- A private hire and Hackney Carriage test exercise was carried out in Worcester. It resulted in several drivers who had been plying for hire being reported to Worcestershire County Council for further legal action.

The Board noted the report and congratulated the team on a comprehensive report and successful quarter.

RESOLVED to note and approve the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Activity and Performance Data Quarter 3

33/19

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES - INFORMATION REPORT - TEMPORARY EVENT NOTICES

The Acting Licensing and Support Services Manager presented the Temporary Event Notices Information report and highlighted the following to Members:

- Events and activities that were covered by a Temporary Event Notice (TEN).
- The approach to granting these TENs was considered 'light touch' and used mainly for low risk, small events and that the limitations for the use of TENs were put in place in the Licensing Act 2003.
- Senior Officers endeavour to work with ward members if the event is deemed to be potentially controversial.

The following questions were asked:

Councillor Stokes, Wychavon District Council questioned WRS officers regarding the criteria for granting a TEN and whether private parties would have to apply. The Head of WRS explained that there was no need for private parties to apply for a notice as long as they do not sell alcohol on the premises, this would exclude the 'backgarden barbeque' from having to apply.

Councillor Jones, Bromsgrove District Council questioned whether the proximity of events to other activities is considered when granting a TEN. The Head of WRS confirmed that WRS do as much as they can to ensure that events are well regulated and do not impact on residents.

Councillors J. Raine and T. Wells left the meeting at 5,48pm. The officers from Malvern District Council explained that they had noted the report prior to their departure and the Principal Solicitor confirmed that the report could be noted in their absence.

RESOLVED to note and approve the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Activity and Performance Data Quarter 3

34/19

TO CONSIDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE HEAD OF LEGAL, EQUALITIES AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING AND WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS TO BE OF SO URGENT A NATURE THAT IT CANNOT WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING.

It was confirmed that there was no other business and the Chair declared the meeting closed.

The meeting closed at 5.54 p.m.

Chairman