

WRS Board

Date: 29th June 2023

Progress report on the automation project

Recommendation | **Members are asked to note the report.**

Introduction

At the first meeting of 2022/23, members agreed to create a reserve of £150,000 from last year's underspend to fund the implementation of automation of data entry for customers, enabling a range of services to be addressed by the client entering data in forms on the WRS website, which would then upload directly into our IDOX Uniform back-office system. This includes the automation of payments for Licensing, so our host authority Bromsgrove District Council will collect fees for the 6 partners and pass money back to the other 5. Officers agreed to provide a short progress report at each Board meeting between then and the actual implementation of the project.

Report

Progress on choosing the right system to meet our needs has progressed since the last meeting. The wider management team and the IT support team have finalised the specifications and decided on a final supplier consulting with procurement colleagues in order to make a direct award.

As with all these things, there are positives and negatives about each system, but on balance we found two had the most potential and had suppliers who seemed most positive about working with us and being able to deliver within our proposed timescales. The preferred supplier 'Victoria Forms' was chosen after a unanimous decision was taken by all parties involved leading to a project team being set up with the Licensing Manager currently managing the project.

Work has already commenced on a number of forms including:

1. Temporary Event Notices (TENs)

We were aiming for this form to go live in June, and we are content that this will still be the case. The team have been liaising with both Wyre Forest IT and the Bromsgrove District Finance Team to ensure everything is set up for payments to be taken and processed correctly once the form is complete. There will also be a program of testing and communications activity scheduled to ensure the form is working before it goes live.

Contact Point

2. Licensing Act Forms

All forms have been populated by Victoria Forms and they are being quality checked by the Licensing team

3. Animal Licensing Forms

The initial form has been populated by Victoria Forms and this is being quality checked by the Licensing team.

There will continue to be dialogue between the teams as and when forms are checked and updated, and we will allow time for testing of all forms prior to them going live.

In parallel to the wider automation project officers have also been discussing the implementation of electronic ID Cards in the taxi trade for both safeguarding and enforcement measures. As there is only one supplier on the market for this technology the procurement process is not as burdensome so officers continue to work with the supplier to ensure all the needs will be met on implementation.

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