



**WRS Board**  
**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

**Progress Report on the Automation Project**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Members are asked to note the report.</b>
<b>Background</b>	<p>At the first meeting of 2022/23, members agreed to create a reserve of £150,000 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.</p> <p>Officers agreed to provide a short progress report at each Board meeting between then and the actual implementation of the project.</p>
<b>Report</b>	<p><b>Governance</b></p> <p>At the last meeting in June, members requested additional assurances around the governance of the project to ensure the correct controls were in place. Officers continue to use the Bromsgrove Project Framework as a mechanism for Project Governance and Management but have introduced an extra level of scrutiny for sign off. Officers have liaised with the councils' shared Audit service and agreed that the Head of Regulatory Services, Director of Finance and Wyre Forest District Council's ICT Manager will be responsible for sign off prior to any project go live milestones that are executed. Officers hope that this provides members with the assurance that these officers will be evaluating the situation independently and objectively, making any decision proportionate to the project.</p> <p>In addition to this, colleagues from audit will be auditing the financial elements of the project throughout to ensure that all safeguards are in place to mitigate any risks of monies being moved to wrong place or account.</p> <p><b>Progress</b></p> <p>Testing and evaluation of forms continues. The project remains in the first testing phase whilst we await the merchant ID number to enable on-line card payments, so progress to Stage 2 testing can commence. Stage 1 testing has involved internal testing with different teams within</p>

WRS, using officers from across the service. This has been beneficial to ensure the look and feel of the forms are easy to use, understand and that users will be able to navigate their way around the form without needing too much assistance. Alongside testing, officers have been putting together FAQ's that will assist future users to complete the on-line forms without having to contact an officer in the first instance. When the project progresses into the second stage of testing, we will look to check these FAQ's with external stakeholders and potential applicants.

Alongside the testing phase a program of communications is being planned in conjunction with the district communications teams. It is envisaged a soft launch strategy will be executed but stakeholder groups will be approached to ensure the correct channels are used to provide information, whether this be through the district council websites or other means.

In parallel to the wider automation project officers continue to assess the roll out of electronic ID Cards in the taxi trade for both safeguarding and enforcement measures. IT colleagues at Wyre Forest continue to work on the dashboard implementation. Once officers understand the timeframes of this in more detail, a plan will be executed for implementation across the County.

**Contact Point**

Kiran Lahel  
Licensing and Support Services Manager  
Email: [kiran.lahel@worcsregservices.gov.uk](mailto:kiran.lahel@worcsregservices.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01562 738067