



WRS Board
Date: 16th November 2023

Progress Report on the Automation Project

Recommendation	Members are asked to note the report.
Background	<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 applicant entering data into 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 implementation of the project.</p>
Report	<p>Members will appreciate that with the limited time since the last report to Board, the amount of change that can be reported will be limited. Officers have continued to quality check additional forms whilst testing on the financial system takes place and planning for the second phase continues.</p> <p>Now officers have the merchant ID, the team have been liaising with Adelante (the financial payment platform) who are now assessing how to attach the ID to the appropriate items in the online store. This will allow the appropriate monies to get transferred to Bromsgrove District Council from whence they will be redistributed to the relevant partner.</p> <p>Sample files have already been exchanged to ensure monies received into Tech-One, the Bromsgrove DC finance system, relate to the item details that are on the interface file. The final version can then be loaded onto the Tech One system.</p> <p>Progress</p> <p>Meetings have been set up with the communications team to discuss the soft launch strategy of the plan so that this can be discussed with stakeholder groups in testing phase two. It is important that all the information that customers require to complete the forms is available at this stage. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website Update • FAQ's – Frequently asked questions • Guidance Documents <p>Some of these may require changing or editing throughout the testing stages.</p>



Sadly, several obstacles have arisen that the team continues to address by working with our external providers. Firstly, the address base gazetteer has required a software update to ensure the most current correct addresses are being used in the system. This would be normal for most address-based systems that, from time to time the associated gazetteer needs to be updated. This should ensure that newer addresses are easy for applicants to put into the system.

Secondly, there has been a delay in implementing the licensing connector from IDOX, our long-standing database supplier, which is required to ensure the correct district is paid once an applicant has selected the district from a drop-down list. We have been informed this will be available as part of a IDOX upgrade in January 2024. Clearly, we want to ensure that the process is seamless and would not consider moving to live until we know that the right monies will be identifiable and portable to the correct partner.

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 and this has progressed. IT colleagues at Wyre Forest continue to work on the dashboard implementation and are now starting to trial this. Once officers understand the timeframes of this in more detail, a plan will be executed for implementation across the County.

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