



WRS Board

Date: 27th June 2024

Progress Report on the Automation Project

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

Background

At the first meeting of 2023, members agreed to create a reserve of £150,000 from the previous 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 Forms

There has been extensive testing of the TENS form since the last WRS Board meeting in February with a number of teams across WRS analysing the form. There have also been two Member sessions arranged so the form could be tested with different stakeholders prior to going live. Frequently asked questions have been drafted to assist applicants when completing the form and district council websites have been edited to reflect the introduction of the form online.

The below table provides an indication of the number of TENS that were received by WRS per district last year. All of these were received and manually inputted into our uniform system by the licensing team.

Temporary Event Notices for 2023 (January to December)

BDC	MHDC	RBC	WCC	WDC	WFDC	TOTAL
408	627	115	384	631	318	2,483

By choosing the TENS form to go live now before the summer will not only allow officers to see how well it is working at the busiest time but it will also relieve some of the pressure off the team to manually input so many forms so they can concentrate their efforts on other important activities.



Work has now commenced on the next set of forms which will cover applications received under the Licensing Act. These include:

- Premises Licence Applications
- Application to vary a premises license
- Application to vary a DPS
- Application form to transfer a premises licence

As concentration reverted back to the TENs form for a while the team will continue on formulating the FAQ's for the forms listed above for second stage testing. A number of these forms have required a need to upload documents by the applicant so the first stage testing populated different questions and discussion points to consider.

Progress has also continued on the 'service request' form where the task and finish group continue to work up a series of questions for different scenarios received by all the teams across WRS. It is probably one of our more difficult jobs to scope as it needs to address a very wide range of potential requests relating to the work of all three WRS sections.

Now that the IT issues have been resolved and further training provided to officers by Victoria Forms on how to create and edit forms the journey and complexity of completing the remaining forms should continue without too many problems from a technical point of view.

The finance team have been working behind the scenes to ensure the framework is in place so that monies are redirected to the correct district council.

Comms and Website Development

Officers continue liaising with the communications leads to ensure district websites are easy to navigate alongside the 'help' guidance and FAQ's. These have been tested with external stakeholders and potential applicants and tweaks have been made where deemed necessary.

Contact Point

In parallel to the wider automation project officers have been working with IDOX to implement the roll out of electronic ID Cards in the taxi trade for both safeguarding and enforcement measures. IT colleagues at Wyre Forest have progressed with work on the dashboard and are now working with SmartTag to ensure we have the appropriate equipment in place to roll this out.

Kiran Lahel

Licensing and Support Services Manager

Email: kiran.lahel@worcsregservices.gov.uk

Tel: 01562 738067

