

# Public Document Pack

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board

20th February 2025

## WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

### MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

THURSDAY 20TH FEBRUARY 2025, AT 4.30 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors H. J. Jones (Chairman), K. Taylor, Harrison, Munro, Holmes, Scott, Hardman, Goodge, Onslow (Vice-Chairman) and Hardiman

Officers: Mr. S. Wilkes, Mr P. Carpenter, David Mellors, Patel, Kiran Lahel and Mrs. P. Ross

Partner Officers: Mr. L. Griffiths, Worcester City Council, Mr. I. Edwards, Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils and Mr. I. Miller, Wyre Forest District Council (all via Microsoft Teams)

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#### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES**

Prior to this item, the Chairman took the opportunity to express the Boards sincere thanks to Mr. P. Carpenter, the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources, Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) and Redditch Borough Council (RBC). The Chairman wished him well in his new role and highlighted that he would be sincerely missed.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C. Palmer, Malvern Hills District Council, Councillor M. Stringfellow, Redditch Borough Council with Councillor D. Munro in attendance as the substitute Member; and Councillor R. Deller, Wychavon District Council with Councillor B. Hardman in attendance as the substitute Member.

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#### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

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#### **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024, be approved as a correct record.

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**WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES REVENUE**  
**MONITORING APRIL - DEC 2024**

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources, Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) and Redditch Borough Council (RBC), introduced the report and in doing so drew Members' attention to the Recommendations as detailed on pages 21 and 22 of the main agenda pack. The report covered the period April to December 2024.

Members were informed that the detailed revenue monitoring report, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report; showed a projected outturn 2024/25 of £8k surplus; and was based on the following assumptions: -

- The agreed pay award for 2024-25 was included in the revenue monitoring reports, the report also reflected the additional funding from partner councils of £21k agreed by the Board at the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024.
- If April to Dec 24 spend on pest control continued on the same trend for the rest of year, there would be an overspend on this service of £19k. The projected outturn figure to be funded by partners was:-

Redditch Borough Council	£11k
Wychavon District Council	£8k

- The following was the actual bereavements costs Apr – Dec 24 to be funded by partners. These costs were charged on an as and when basis. Due to the nature of the charge, it was not possible to project a final outturn figure:

Bromsgrove District Council	£5k
Malvern Hills District council	£4k
Redditch Borough Council	£7k
Worcester City Council	£1k

This income was included in the income projected outturn.

The Licence for Victoria Forms was £32k.

- Appendix 2 to the report showed the detail of the income achieved by WRS April – Dec 24, the income had increased which was very positive.
- Any grant funded expenditure was shown separate to the core service costs as this was not funded by the participating Councils.

Information on the National Insurance (NI) contributions 2025-26 onwards and the Employer National Insurance Contributions Grant – Explanatory Note, were briefly explained on page 24 of the main agenda pack.

Appendix 3 to the report provided figures on the 2025-26 Unavoidable Salary Pressures – NI Increases, with a cost to WRS at £72k.

Members queried if any pest control issues were of a concern in any particular Ward or if fly-tipping had caused any pest control issues.

The Director of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) explained that with regard to pest control, each partner authority had specific criteria for charges for pest control services. In all five district areas where it was offered, only residents in receipt of certain qualifying benefits who needed support with pest control could get free or discounted treatments, depending on which pest control service was required and the qualifying benefit they were in receipt of. Redditch, Borough Council used to offer all residents free treatment for rats, but this ceased in 2017.

The Director of WRS agreed to liaise with the Technical Services Manager, WRS to provide Members with information on any Ward areas where there was a concern that possible pest control issues were due to fly-tipping.

The Director of WRS responded to a further question of air pollution and the use of greener fleets for WRS.

In doing so, Members were informed that officers had scoped electric vans for the dog warden service. However, due to the vast area covered by the dog warden service (which included Malvern, Cheltenham, Birmingham City, Gloucester City and Tewkesbury); the mile range of electric vans was not sufficient for the area covered by WRS. Hence, the service chose the best quality diesel vans. However, officers would continue to keep an eye on the potential use of electric vans, as there would come a time when electric vans had a longer mile range. With

regard to using HVO fuel this would be an expensive option, as at the present time it is a significantly higher cost per litre than diesel.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources, responded to queries with regards to NI and the local government finance settlement.

In response to a question on the Ukrainian Support Work, the Director of WRS explained that WRS currently delivered this work for Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils only; with a small number of staff and that currently the Government had agreed to fund this work for into the new financial year.

The Chairman then took the opportunity to draw Members' attention to the Recommendations. On being out to the vote, it was

**RESOLVED** that the Board

- 1.1 note the final financial position for the period April – Dec 2024
- 1.2 partner councils are informed of their liabilities for Apr – Dec 24 in relation to Bereavements, as follows:-

<b>Council</b>	<b>Apr–Dec Actual Bereavements £000</b>	<b>24 for</b>
Bromsgrove District Council	5	
Malvern Hills District Council	4	
Redditch Borough Council	7	
Worcester City Council	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	

- 1.3 partner councils are informed of their liabilities for 2024-25 in relation to additional Technical Officers, as follows:-

<b>Council</b>	<b>Estimated Projected Outturn 2024/25 Envirocrime &amp; Planning Enforcement £000</b>	<b>Estimated Projected Outturn 2024/25 Tech Officer Animal Activity £000</b>	<b>Estimated Projected Outturn 2024/25 Gull Control £000</b>
Bromsgrove District Council	310	9	
Malvern Hills District Council		7	
Redditch Borough Council	174	2	
Worcester City Council		3	35
Wychavon District Council		15	
Wyre Forest District Council		9	
<b>Total</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>35</b>

and

- 1.4 note that following the Government's guidance for reclaiming of National Insurance increases for 25-26 onwards, because these increases were linked to Revenue Outturn data forms, these increases to be funded by partner councils as outlined in the report approved at the meeting of the WRS Board on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024, the financial summary of which was included in the spreadsheet attached at Appendix 3, to the report.

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**WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 2025/6**

The Board were asked to consider the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Service Plan 2025/2026.

The Director of WRS apologised for a typographical error in the report, which showed 2024/5 and not 2025/6.

The Director of WRS then introduced the report and in doing so drew Members' attention to the Recommendations, as detailed on page 31 of the main agenda pack.

The Board signed off the service plan for WRS each year. The process helped to make Members aware of what the service was proposing for the relevant financial year and provided a sign off that some central government bodies liked to see in relation to service delivery plans e.g., the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

The plan followed very much the pattern of previous years and had an Executive Summary to pick up the main points. Last year's plan was the first in recent years which had no pandemic related activity as part of it. This year's plan continued to consider the long-standing strategic priorities for local authority regulatory services provided by Department for Business and Trade (DBaT), as these provided a framework that allowed WRS to have a golden thread back to the priorities of the six partners and to link to the requirements of the various national bodies that oversaw the work of WRS.

Whilst WRS had retained these for this purpose, the focus of this year's plan remained on the tactical priorities identified in the service's Strategic Assessment that had been refreshed for the coming 3-years. This piece of work reviewed the full data and intelligence picture and looked at emerging threats. The assessment recommended retaining our cross-cutting priorities but rolling more work into these areas:

- Supporting a safe and vibrant night-time economy
- Promoting the responsible sale, breeding, and ownership of dogs
- Promoting safe, clean, and healthy communities

As highlighted in the report, most aspects of business-as-usual fitted into these priorities, particularly the last where things like environmental permitting and food hygiene related to businesses that sat outside of the night-time economy.

Again, a range of high-level activities against the 3 tactical priorities were identified within the plan so that Members would be aware of the general focus

of the workload. Below this would sit several plans, either team based or cross cutting that would be used to drive the actual business activities.

The plan had been devised in the face of on-going financial uncertainty with money being tight across the public sector. Both businesses and households continued to feel the pinch, and this had led in the past to increases in work for regulatory services whereby businesses may take more risks to survive, and as households sought to reduce expenditure on what may be essential products.

The Government's announcement of a devolution model for England involving the removal of two-tier arrangements in favour of unitary local government across England would introduce a further factor to be considered. Whatever the shape this took going forward, WRS stood ready to contribute to the conversation whilst continuing to do its best by the local authority partners.

Working with businesses and other partners was a key theme for both generating income to mitigate financial risk but also to ensure that outcomes were delivered that matched the priorities of partners and stakeholders. Delivery for other local authorities also remained a key income generation strategy, supported by limited work for the private sector and any specific grant monies that we felt were worthwhile pursuing. WRS had managed to build on our client-base post pandemic with new clients for dog-related support, and we hoped that we would be able to identify new ones, although over time this would get harder especially as the devolution/ Unitary agenda gained momentum. Officers however remained hopeful that this strategy would remain fruitful in the immediate future.

WRS would continue to use intelligence to drive the business forward and the embedding of this approach and its associated processes would continue.

As with previous years, Members were being asked to pay particular attention to the provisions for food hygiene delivery in the coming year. This was in order to meet one of the recommendations of the 2017 audit by the FSA who were keen that Members had a better understanding of the demand in this service area when they authorised the plan going forward.

The five new team members who had now been recruited, enjoyed working for WRS, their recruitment was a positive outcome for the Environmental Health & Trading Standards Manager's service area. By

the time this plan was implemented in April, all the new staff recruited, using last year's funding uplift, would be trained to a reasonable level and contributing fully. So, the figures for visits would reflect the additional capacity made available to the service to deliver the increase in lower risk visits and review of new / changed premises or businesses. Members were further asked to note the proposed numbers of inspections and similar activities proposed for the new financial year that would be undertaken to discharge the statutory duties of the 6 partners in relation to food control. WRS would endeavour to keep the Board updated on progress as the year progressed.

The Risk Register had also been updated to reflect the current position in areas like IT provision and development, staffing levels, and our reliance on contractual relationships for income. The threat from cyber-attack had become more real in recent years as the devastating consequences were felt by colleagues in other local authorities elsewhere in the country. WRS would work closely with our ICT host, Wyre Forest District Council, to limit the risk of this. Our teams had for many years been using mobile and flexible work patterns which had yielded efficiencies but our reliance on ICT provision to deliver this did increase our vulnerability to disruption.

Given the FSA intervention, although this potential issue had always been flagged in the Risk Register as a general risk of not meeting Government or central body expectations, we have added a specific line for them given they were most likely one of the central bodies to intervene with local authorities. We have also added a line for the potential risk from the impact of the devolution process and the move to unitary local government, although it was not expected to create any issues in the period for which the service plan was valid.

Following concerns raised about the possibility of a cyber-attack, as experienced by other local authorities. The Director of WRS reassured Members that their ICT host, Wyre Forest District Council, conducted a lot of testing on systems and that regular training and reminders with regards to Phishing emails were routinely sent out. All of WRS systems sat behind their ICT host's firewall.

Members referred to the plan and the FSA expectations with aligning activities more closely to the Food Law Enforcement Codem of Practice, and WRS delivering their expectations.

The Environmental Health & Trading Standards Manager stated that, pre-pandemic, they had received a lot of encouragement about the work



undertaken by WRS with concentrating on premises with a higher risk and intelligence led inspections to lower risk outlets. However, the FSA now required Local Authorities to inspect all businesses rather than use intelligence led inspections. As highlighted in the service plan, the FSA remained insistent that authorities aligned their activities more closely to the Food Law Enforcement Code of Practice and any future revisions to the Food Hygiene Code. Part of the Agency's role is ensuring that the food law regime operates at a level that gives confidence and reassurance to countries receiving exported UK products, that our food products were safe.

Members further referred to the priority shown below and were somewhat surprised that this was shown as a cross-cutting priority.

- Promoting the responsible sale, breeding and ownership of dogs.

The Director of WRS explained that dogs turned up in so many areas of activity. Dog nuisance had joined music as a prolific source of allegation of potential nuisance, so this was increasingly an area that WRS had to work on.

The Director of WRS also reminded Members that, at the meeting of the Board on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024, Members had received a report on 'Operation Lisbon 2 : Dog Breeding'. This report detailed that the primary purpose of the operation was to assess the people, businesses, and locations associated with unlicensed dog breeding. The report further highlighted that the total value of the adverts listed was more than £7 million across Shropshire and Worcestershire, with over £4 million of that in our county. The level of stray dogs was high, which included dogs that were not micro-chipped or micro-chipped dogs where the recorded information was incorrect. The statutory retention period for strays created significant kennelling costs for the partners. So, all these elements were reasons for making this a priority. Members were further informed that the Technical Services Manager, WRS, was currently developing a piece of project work, which he hoped may be reported to the next meeting of the Board.

Members further questioned if more could be done with communications, vets and kennel clubs. Lobby for changes in the law.

The Director of WRS commented that Members had as much influence as WRS for changes in the law. WRS would continue to deal with enforcement and would be developing activities to tackling some of the

micro-chipping issues and continue to focus on dog breeding visits and checks.

The Licensing and Support Services Manager, WRS, further explained that she sat on a number of national animal health and animal licensing/welfare groups, along with vets and other representatives. She would reassure Members that animal welfare was paramount in those conversations with officials. WRS had a very experienced animal licensing officer who conducted the checks on commercial dog breeders and kennels who held local authority licenses or anyone applying for such a licence. These checks were very robust.

The Director of WRS further commented that the work of the Technical Services Manager, WRS, involved a lot of communications on these aspects.

Members further queried Animal Health and rapidly spreading diseases not being included in the Risk Assessment, and questions were raised on the recent outbreak of bird flu and keeping captive birds.

The Director of WRS explained that he was a member of the Worcestershire Tactical Control Group and was part of the county-wide emergency response protocols for partners. However, the lead partner for notifiable diseases in animals would be Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Trading Standards, and for human diseases County Council Public Health and not the district councils. District Councils had very little formal involvement in notifiable animal disease outbreak control. However, WRS would work with and assist WCC Public Health, with any human disease outbreaks as they did during the pandemic, and as part of their normal response to things like food poisoning outbreaks and similar diseases. Members were correct in that you had to register as a keeper with DEFRA even if you only kept one captive bird outside your property in an aviary or similar arrangement. You were not required to register for birds kept permanently in your home.

The Director of WRS further agreed to provide information to Councillor K. Taylor on the Captive Birds new legislation and restrictions.

The Director of WRS responded to further questions on:-

- The work carried out with Muller Dairies and Timpsons, and in doing so also briefly explained about the Primary Authority Partnerships.

- Consultation and Engagement – explaining officers aimed to get out approximately 100 a month, there had been a drastic fall in the return rate. Officers were looking at different ways to engage, sending out paper surveys, electronic surveys. Responses were really difficult, and officers had questioned if maybe people felt bombarded in general with being asked to complete surveys / questionnaires.

The Director of WRS agreed to provide Councillor T. Onslow with information on how many surveys were sent out and what the response rate was for last year.

A comment was made with regard to taxi enforcement and district specific breakdown of information. The Director of WRS agreed to note this for future reference and to look at including a broader outline on taxi enforcement.

Members also briefly questioned the process for producing the service plan and if WRS staff had been involved and if senior officers in the partner authorities had been consulted with.

The Director of WRS stated that staff were engaged with further down the line on what needed to be done. The Partner Officers from each partner authority on the Board however were not directly engaged with, but officers from the partner authorities whose assistance was needed for particular activities would be contacted for support.

Members thanked the Director of WRS and officers for a very useful document and looked forward to their comments being noted and included in the future.

**RESOLVED** that the Board

- (i) approve the WRS Service Plan for 2025/6; and
- (ii) specifically note the level of work to be undertaken by the service this year in relation to the partners' roles as local food authorities.

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### **ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE DATA QUARTER 3 2024/25**

The Environmental Health & Trading Standards Manager presented the Activity and Performance Data, Quarter 3 2024/2025 report, and in doing so the following key points were highlighted: -

### **Activity Data**

The number of Food Safety cases logged in our system in the first three quarters of 2024/5 represented a fall of 11% compared to 2022/23 and a reduction of 2% compared to 2023/24. Most service requests tended to be enquiries, including requests for business advice, rather than complaints. Of the 357 actual food complaints received during the period, 69% were related to issues with food products (such as poor-quality food or food containing a foreign object,) whilst 31% were related to alleged poor hygiene standards or practices at food businesses. In relation to these latter cases, it was seldom that they resulted in action as, even if standards had slipped, they seldom meant a business scored less than 3 on the Food Hygiene Rating System, so were still making safe food.

Quarter 3 saw health and safety work generally following trends, although the actual case number in the quarter fell slightly compared to the previous two. The number of cases received between 1st April and 31st December 2024 represented a fall of 11% compared to 2022/23 but an increase of 4% compared to 2023/24.

Licensing application numbers during Q3 and 4 generally fell compared to Q2 figures and this year had continued this trend. Complaints and enquiries fell during Q3 compared to Q2, but overall, they probably remained on trend. The overall number of cases received between 1st April and 31st December 2024 represents an increase of 4% compared to 2022/23 but this was consistent with 2023/24. In terms of the breakdown between application work and complaint/ enquiry work, around 65% of cases consisted of applications and registrations, with the remainder being the complaints and enquiries. Some 30% of applications related to private hire or hackney carriage vehicles and a further 27% were temporary event notices.

As with other areas of work, the service received a higher number of enquiries, such as queries about regulations, by-laws, and licence conditions compared with what might be described as complaints involving licensed businesses or individuals. Looking at the latter, during this financial year so far, some 41% of complaints related to taxi licensing (such as reports of poor driver behaviour, unauthorised parking, or poor driving standards,) with 17% related to alcohol licensing (business allegedly breaching the four licensing objectives). A further 10% of complaints related to animal licensing with most cases relating to the unlicensed breeding and/or sale of dogs.

Planning enquiries in Quarter 3 continued the upward trend previously described. The number of cases received to the end of quarter 3 represented an increase of 29% compared to 2022/23 and an increase of 18% compared to 2023/24. Around 89% of enquiries were consultations for air quality, contaminated land, or nuisances; and 1 in 4 enquiries were now processed (on a contractual basis) on behalf of other local authorities as part of the service's income generation activities.

Members will see that the fall in nuisance complaints through quarter 3 mirrored previous seasonal patterns reflecting the poor weather in 2024/5. The number of cases received between 1st April and 31st December 2024 represented a reduction of 29% compared to 2022/23 and 22% compared to 2023/24. This was likely driven by poor weather. Approximately 90% of cases were reports of nuisances with around 43% of cases relating to noise from domestic properties (such as noise from barking dogs or noise from loud music). Other prominent nuisances commonly included noise from hospitality businesses, smoke from the burning of domestic or commercial waste, and dust from construction sites.

### **Performance**

Quarter 3 was another more limited reporting period. The non-business customer measure at 58.6% but was slightly lower than at the same point last year (60.7%,) but slightly above the previous one (57.9%.) Whilst we saw reduced demand for nuisance work during the period, it seemed likely that problems in other areas of work like animal licensing may be reflected here. Response numbers also remained low with under 80 replies received from April to December. Having reviewed the data, the speed of addressing the issue and whether the overall outcome met expectations still needed improvement. The latter may need clear conversations at the beginning of the process as to the potential likelihood of being able to achieve the change someone wanted to see. Numbers who felt better equipped to deal with future issues at 54.2 % was slightly below the figures at the same point in the previous 2 years.

Business customer satisfaction had fallen slightly this quarter to 96.8% but was still well above last year's 92% at the same point in the year.

Overall numbers of compliant and non-compliant food businesses were at 98.3% and 1.7% respectively. This remained good and on a par with previous years.

The ratio of compliments to complaints remains good at 58 to 17.

Staff sickness had increased from 1.42 days per FTE to 2.94 days per FTE cumulative for the year. This was higher than last year but close to the level at the same point in the previous 2-years (2.44, 2.94). Whilst the cold and flu viruses appeared to be worse this year than last, over 36% of sickness fell into the long term (i.e., member of staff being off for 28 days plus,) so some of this was down to serious illness being suffered by one or two members of staff. Sickness also remained well below pre-pandemic levels with 2019/20 having 3.82, and 2018/19 having 3.26 days per FTE at the same point in the year.

The Director of WRS, responded to questions from Members with regards to customer satisfaction, and in doing so commented that a lot of customer dissatisfaction related to noise nuisance, some of which were not always a statutory nuisance under legislation. The law did not always meet public expectation, so not everyone was happy with the outcome of noise nuisance complaints. There had also been an increase in service complaints with regards to animal licensing, where businesses were not happy with what they were expected to do to comply.

As highlighted in the report, the increase in staff sickness was in part due to a small number of staff on long term sickness due to serious illness.

Councillor K. Holmes, Worcester City Council asked for it to be noted that Cathedral Ward had now been split into two new wards, named Fort Royal and Cathedral. The Director of WRS noted this and agreed that officers would make this change in future reports.

In response to a question on the Homes for Ukraine team meeting with an external Mental Health team, the Director of WRS explained that WRS officers acted in a liaison role for Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils working with other colleagues to support guests on the Homes for Ukraine initiative. WRS did not deliver mental health support they acted in a signposting role.

Officers responded to several general questions on: -

- Dogs euthanasia, had this increased or stabilised? WRS general policy on dog euthanasia.
- Noise issues and legislation, whereby the public struggled to understand current legislation with regard to statutory nuisance.
- Taxi Licensing fees in Wyre Forest compared to other partner authorities' fees.

**RESOLVED** that the Activity and Performance Data Quarter 3 2024/25, be noted and that Members use the contents of the report in their own reporting back to their respective partner authority.

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### **PROGRESS REPORT ON THE AUTOMATION PROJECT**

The Licensing and Support Services Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) provided Members with an update on the Automation Project.

Members were informed that the Temporary Events Notice (TEN) form went live for all 6 districts in Worcestershire in September 2024 and that the team had continued to monitoring progress closely since its launch. The shift to moving online continued to rise with very few queries or challenges.

The following forms were now complete and were all in the final testing stages ready to launch: -

1. Personal Licence Applications
2. Premises Licence Applications
  - Application to vary a Premises Licence
  - Application to vary a DPS
  - Application form to transfer a Premises Licence

The next set of forms to be created and tested would be: -

3. Animal Licensing Applications
4. Pavement Licensing
5. Taxi Applications

Whilst the animal licensing and pavement licensing forms were being created, the team would look to form a plan of engagement with the taxi trade, as officers would like to do as much testing with the trade and operators to ensure that there were champions in each district. The formulation of the guidance and FAQs on the WRS website would be critical to ensure a smooth transition therefore engaging with this group was crucial.

With regards to the Taxi ID Cards, the three teams involved in this project (MyTAG, IDOX and Wyre Forest IT) were working together to ensure that there was no risk to the service when data was exposed outside of the environment (when enabling remote access to the IDOX

database). Although these cards were used by other public sector services such as the NHS and the police, they had not been used by any other local authority in the country, so there needed to be assurances that this could be delivered with no risk to the Councils services.

The Chairman commented that this was great work and leading in the right direction.

In response to a query as to the public benefits, the Licensing and Support Services Manager, WRS, briefly explained that this enabled forms to be completed online, whereby previously such forms would be submitted via email or in the post and, once received, officers would have to manually input the data (from the received forms) onto the WRS database, which was very time consuming. Whilst the drive would be to have more forms completed on-line, should anyone be unable to complete an online form, officers would still assist them.

Councillor K. Holmes, Worcester City Council commented that she had tried the system during the testing period, and was shocked that prior to online forms, that officers had had to manually input the data. She had welcomed the change.

In response to a query on the Taxi ID Cards and the benefits for the public, Members were informed that; the travelling public using taxis would be able to enter a taxi and scan the driver's Taxi ID Card, to check that the driver's licence was valid (had not been suspended or revoked). Passengers would be able to report any issues found whilst scanning a Taxi ID Card to Licensing WRS, and officers would be able to deal with this as soon as was practicable given the potential seriousness of this.

**RESOLVED** that the Progress Report on the Automation Project be noted.

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**URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business on this occasion.

The meeting closed at 5.54 p.m.

Chairman