

**Report of the Service Director Legal Services  
to the General Licensing Regulatory Board  
to be held on the 23 October 2019**

**Digitalisation of the Licensing Function**

**1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the ongoing project work to digitalise the way the Licensing service operates.

**2. Background**

Analysis of the Licensing function has shown processes and procedures that are predominantly paper based are labour intensive.

Principally the Licensing Team process a number of applications and issue and manage licences for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, hackney carriage and private hire drivers, private hire operators, premises licences (alcohol and entertainment), personal licences under the licensing act, scrap metal dealers and many other statutory licences and permits.

The application forms, documents and tests are nearly all completed on paper. In addition all documentary evidence from applicants is currently submitted on paper. There is a necessity to run a 'front office' to deal with applicants and licence holders receive and distribute printed and written materials and provide advice. This requires a licensing team member to occupy a meeting room in Westgate reception each afternoon. The team also manage a high volume of telephone calls from applicants and licensees and their agents and representatives on a daily basis.

### **3. Current Position**

In the context of Future Council and Digital First the current method utilised in providing the licensing service is no longer acceptable and so the Digitalisation project will aim to convert existing manual operations so far as feasible into digital operations and it is envisaged that this will be undertaken by March 2020. The project will be approached on a phased basis, weighted by a combination of least complex/greatest impact first.

### **4. Proposal**

It has been identified that Phase One of the project will be to convert the existing local knowledge test booking system to an on-line, self-service facility.

IT support will be required for the team to carry out process mapping and to design and install the online forms and procedures incorporating receipt of payments, conduct and assessment of tests and the receipt and issue of documentation. IT will also have to assess the capabilities of Licensing's existing software, which may need changing, modifying or replacing.

The digitalisation project ultimately intends to convert existing licensing processes into on-line, self-service procedures to provide a more efficient customer interface and save time and resource.

### **5. Recommendation**

Members are asked to support the Licensing Team and the Licensed Trades with the digitalisation project as a culture shift will be required to ensure the success of this project.

### **6. Officer Contact**

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