

# LICENSING COMMITTEE

## Fit for the Future – Digitalisation Update

3 October 2024

### Report of Licensing Manager

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide members of Licensing Committee with an update on the progress made in the fit for the future – Digitalisation project.

**This report is public.**

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) That members note the contents of the report.

##### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 To support the alignment of resources, structures, and services, the council has introduced a programme of 'outcomes-based resourcing' (OBR). The OBR programme has been used to consider the entirety of the council's resources and activities, identifying opportunities to explore innovative service models and break down internal and external barriers in pursuit of tangible positive outcomes across the Lancaster district.
- 1.2 An external contractor (People 2) was appointed by Lancaster City Council to carry out three service-based digitalisation opportunity assessments, which would act as a forerunner for further digitalisation workpieces across the Council. Licensing was highlighted as an area for development, alongside HR and Customer Services.
- 1.3 People 2 were provided with an overview of the key matters affecting the licensing service, namely out of date work practices, lengthy, paper-based applications and "clunky" processes. The licensing team is small, as such it is recognised that change is required to build resilience and ensure the service is sustainable, essentially to streamline and digitise wherever practical.

Following several discussions/sessions between the People 2 contractor and the Licensing Manager, a set of recommendations were produced; these 14 recommendations have shaped the fit for future project.

- 1.2 The 14 recommendations centre around 4 key points, information and guidance, customer contact, customer front door and end to end digital and licensing system(s).

Some link to one another and there is an intention to complete the project in a logical order, for example, we couldn't review our call handling arrangements without first

ensuring website info/guidance etc is all up to date/clear/concise etc. Others link to our service workplan for the year.

- 1.3 It is recognised that several internal Council departments are required to support and assist with delivery of the project, including the projects team, ICT, Finance, Communications and Customer Services.
- 1.4 The Licensing Manager attends regular meetings with the Councils overall digitalisation group, comprising of Chief Officers, Cabinet members and lead service officers, providing updates and linking parts of the project with others, requesting support and feedback on delivery of the project.

## **2.0 Proposal Details**

2.1 The recommendations of the People 2 assessments and the basis of the fit for the future programme are listed below (in plain English).

- Ensure front end information and guidance is clear, concise and up to date. (website/links to signpost etc)
- Digitalise all Taxi Application via Granicus system, integrate with payment system and if possible, licensing software.
- Alongside the development of digital forms, develop a channel shift comms campaign to create momentum.
- Undertake a specific review of guidance information to ensure it is clear and easy to navigate & understand.
- Complete process & workflow mapping with a view to creating Granicus Form(s) for the TEN application process, integrated with licensing and payment systems.
- Complete process & workflow mapping with a view to creating Granicus Form(s) for the Premises application process, integrated with licensing and payment systems.
- Review and streamline driver new driver application criteria.
- Investigate options to upgrade or improve the existing LALPAC to integrate fully with digital processes.
- The Council should review the potential systems and potential cost versus benefits of procuring a new system.
- Consider call handling arrangements
- Proactive engagement with the licensed trade regarding renewal applications
- Contract out the DBS and update service
- Review need for driver training course
- Commercial Services – Licensing Direct/Personal Licence Training

2.2 Members of Licensing Committee will note that several of the recommendations from the assessment tie in with other aspects of the Service Workplan, e.g. review of application standard/DBS requirements (Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Policy Review).

## **3.0 Current Position**

3.1 Several of the 14 recommendations that were identified as “quick wins” have been implemented, additionally action has been taken with the majority of the recommendations, including engagement with support services and external meetings/discussions.

3.2 Attached at **Appendix 1** is a table highlighting the progress made on each

recommendation along with any potential problems/barriers.

#### 4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 Significant progress has been made with the Licensing fit for the future digitalisation project. As highlighted the taxi applications have been prioritised and are ready to launch, alongside a communications campaign and support for existing licence holders.
- 4.2 Licensing Act 2003 applications will be the next area of the service to be mapped out, with personal licence/temporary event and premises licensing being offered online in the same manner as taxi licences.
- 4.3 The licensing service is supported in the delivery of the project from colleagues across the Council.
- 4.4 It is hoped that by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025, all licence applications can be hosted and completed digitally. Additionally, existing licence-holders support the channel shift and engage with the digital process.

<b>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>	
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<b>(including Health &amp; Safety, Equality &amp; Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):</b>	
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No comments.	
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<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	
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None Identified	
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<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	
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None Identified.	
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<b>OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces</b>	
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None	
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<b>SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS</b>	
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None	
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<b>MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS</b>	
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None	
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<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	
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