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Briefing Note

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Title: Response to Questions from Scrutiny Panel – Kingdom Item
Prepared by: Shaun Walker **Date:** 26 September 2018
Intended audience: Internal Partner organisation Public Confidential

Purpose or recommendation

At the meeting of the Vibrant and Sustainable Scrutiny Panel on 12 July 2018, the Scrutiny Panel asked for further information from Kingdom and Council Officers on several areas. These were as follows: -

- A) The number of known people with special needs or vulnerabilities who had applied to have a fixed penalty notice (FPN) revoked and the number that had been successful.
- B) The number of people who had failed to pay their FPN.
- C) The number of people the Council had pursued through the legal system for non-payment of fixed penalty notices.

Responses

Kingdom have responded to question A as follows:

During 2017 there were 26 FPN representations put forward on the grounds of special needs or vulnerabilities. Following a case review all were cancelled as it was considered not in the public interest to pursue further. During 2018 eight similar representations have been received and all FPNs have been cancelled. All Kingdom staff have undergone the same Equality and Diversity training that is mandatory for Council staff.

Response to question B: -

The number of people who had failed to pay their fixed penalty notice.

Period	FPNs issued	FPNs Paid	FPNs unpaid	Payment Rate
2016 Jan - June	4150	2823	1327	68%
2017 Jan - June	4913	3285	1628	67%
2018 Jan - June	2941	1838	1103	63%

During 2015 and 2016 offender details were verified by the officer calling an admin officer within Wolverhampton Civic Centre who would conduct validation checks using a licensed system known as Tracesmart. During 2017 this procedure changed and became centralised so all calls from around the various local authority sites were handled by a team in Head Office. In 2018 the company took the decision to try Tracesmart search technology built into the hand - held equipment used by the Field staff so that the information provided by the offender could be validated on the spot. It is thought that this change could be partly responsible for the drop- in payment rates and will be kept under review as the sole source of income for Kingdom is through paid FPNs.

The payment methods: (online / auto telephone / Paypoint / Council kiosks) have functioned well throughout the duration of the contract. Online payment remains the most popular with over 50% of people now choosing this method to pay their FPN which is currently set at £75.

Response to question C: -

The number of people the Council had pursued through the legal system for non-payment of fixed penalty notices.

Period	Non – paid FPN's	Prosecuted	Percentage of unpaid FPNs subsequently prosecuted
2015	864	107	12.38%
2016	3092	1363	44%
2017	3395	1932	56.9%
2018 Jan – May	941	1022 includes some from late 2017	100%

During 2015 – 2017 the number of prosecutions the Council was able to process was limited by Court time availability. This changed in 2018 when the Single Justice

Notice Procedure was introduced by Birmingham Magistrates' Court and now the Council is able to prosecute all who fail to pay a FPN. The revenue received from the successful recovery of prosecution costs averages £7,000 / months and now exceeds the amount received in paid FPNs. The whole amount of the prosecution costs recovered is retained by the Council under the terms of the contract.

