



Performance Update Report

April to September 2015

Date of Report: 05th January 2016

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Civicance Ltd is an agent for Cheshire East Council (CEC) and is owned and controlled by CEC
Registered Office: Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, Cheshire CW11 1HZ



1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Civicance Ltd provides a number of statutory regulatory services on behalf of Cheshire East, some of which are chargeable functions and open to a competitive marketplace.
- 1.2 The services Civicance Ltd undertake currently include the following;
 - 1.1 Building Regulations fee earning
 - 2.1 Building Regulation non fee earning
 - 3.1 Response to report of Dangerous structures
 - 4.1 Monitoring of Demolitions
 - 5.1 Local land and property searches
 - 6.1 Street naming and numbering
 - 7.1 Planning administration and application registration
- 1.3 All of the work undertaken by Civicance Ltd involves, at one stage or another, interactions with residents of Cheshire East on a daily basis. Services offered need to be responsive and prompt, whilst being efficient.
- 1.4 Through the inaugural stages of the activity the members of Civicance Ltd have focussed efforts significantly to achieve the requirements as set out within the agency agreement between Cheshire East Council
- 1.5 This report provides a summary of operational performance between 01st April 2015 and the 30th September 2015 together with highlights of financial performance to the end of October 2015.

2.0 Operational achievements

- 2.1 The company operates within a competitive marketplace particularly focused on the fee earning Building Regulation and land charges areas. This business activity relies on quality service provision and service user relationships. With this mind, Civicance Ltd has recognised the importance of building such relationships and has focussed on the following activity in addition to the day to day requirements;

Building relationships

- Met with the South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce to improve business connectivity. The company has attended a number of events which have subsequently resulted in further discussion with those proposing to development within the Cheshire East area.
- Developed and conducted two networking / customer information events. Agents and architects have been invited to two promotional events introducing Civicance Ltd whilst providing the opportunity to update on changes to legislation

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- Attended both the Cheshire and Nantwich shows, to improve public awareness and perception.
- Interacted and liaised with local schools. Improving professional awareness.
- Conducted 3 builders early morning surgeries, engaging directly with local builders on an informal basis, providing advice and support directly.

Improved a professional web presence through the development of;

- a Civance website with interactive forms
- accounts for Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn
- information e-shots, providing key information to customers regularly. This form of communication provides the ability to regularly maintain contact with service users and non-users, improving brand awareness.

Informing residents through the development of;

- A new “Civance – Guide to extending your home”. This guide is predominantly available in an electronic format and is available to view through the website. A link is also provided at the foot of all emails issued by the Company. The guide provides information to homeowners relating to the Building Regulation processes when extending their home.
- A radio campaign through Silk Fm. In response to need to improve customer awareness, Civance Ltd has commissioned a radio campaign through Silk Fm, which ran for 13 weeks ending at Christmas. A further regional campaign is planned for the new year through the LABC Organisation
- Marketing leaflets distributed to key locations within the area. Through marketing analysis it is apparent that locality does impact the decision of service providers used. Marketing leaflets to introduce Civance Ltd and the relationship with Cheshire East have been distributed to a number of post code areas where competition remains fierce.

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Working with others

- Progressed discussion with neighbour authorities. Discussion has continued to understand the nature of how any future joint ventures would operate. Initially Civicance Ltd has proposed a memorandum of understanding which is currently being considered by all parties however this is seen as a short term measure.
- Continuing to proactively participate within the national LABC organisation. The “LABC” brand has been considered to play a key role in the part of local authority building control activities over the years, and it is considered important to maintain these relationships to retain existing customers. LABC can assist both CEC and Civicance to further promote service delivery.

2.2 To ensure that the functions of the company remain fit for purpose Civicance Ltd has also driven forward a number of business improvement initiatives;

- Reviewed, recommended and implemented changes to planning application stage rules that provide greater transparency through the website. This will provide a clear audit trail to the planning application process, and provide information on the website as soon as an application is received.
- Implemented greater document management processes moving away from printing documents.
- Developed and implemented a process for planning application case management, thereby contributing to the audit trail of an application
- The development of planning application performance reports as requested by the Development management team
- Improved planning registration time from over 4 weeks to under 5 days

2.3 In addition to operations highlighted within 2.1 and 2.2 above, the company has also;

- Registered 960 Building Regulation applications, of which 937 were fee earning.
- Registered 2794 Planning Applications
- Conducted 7358 site inspections provided through 100% same day site visits
- Responded to 21 dangerous structures
- Registered 881 initial notices
- Registered 10,906 competent persons notifications
- Responded to over 5,000 land charge search requests
- Provided a FIRST STAGE response to the Bosley incident, co-ordinating activities, assisting the search and rescue services
- Supported the Heritage team in the conservation of the Brooks Mill, Congleton. Taking appropriate immediate actions to maintain the mills structural integrity.

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3.0 Performance Framework

3.1 A number of Key Performance Indicators have been included within the agency agreement that require the Company to monitor performance against. The following tables highlight the required performance expected of the Company as part of this agreement:

Action	Reason	Benefits to the Company	Benefits to the Customer
Monitor Performance of Planning Application Registration	As required under contract agreement. Monitor Performance levels to clearly indicate areas for improvement.	Data can be used to forecast future work trends, staffing requirements and to identify performance against agreement targets	Performance set against the contract and associated guidelines to achieve what the company sets out to achieve. Improve customer service delivery of planning applications

Service Level Indicator	2014 – 2015 Cheshire East achievements	Target set for 2015 – 2016	Target Set for 2016 - 2017	Schedule 1 KPI	Schedule 6 KPI	Possible Penalties	Target Achievement for the period
April - September 2015							
Valid Application registered within 10 working days	57%	100%	100%	Yes	Yes	No	99%
Valid Planning Applications registered within 5 working days	3%	80%	90%	Yes	Yes	Yes	94%
Registration of valid Householder applications registered within 2 working days	22%	90%	90%	Yes	Yes	No	72%
Registration of valid prior applications within 1 working day	29%	100%	100%	Yes	Yes	Yes	54%
Neighbours and consultees notified within 1 day of registration of applications		90%	100%	Yes	Yes	No	100%
Requests for additional information, amendments or corrections to invalid applications sent out within 5 working days of receipt		90%	90%	Yes	Yes	No	u/a
Issue Decision Notices within 1 day of Decision being produced		95%	95%	Yes	Yes	Yes	u/a

Commentary: The company has improved service provision significantly over the inaugural months, however there are a few areas in need of further improvement. A review of processes is currently underway with the aim to identify resources, therefore enabling performance targets for those highlighted “amber” above to be met. Additionally, throughout the start-up process of the company a number of staff changes have been made that have also distracted resources.

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Action	Reason	Benefits to the Company	Benefits to the Customer
Monitor Market activity together with performance relating to Fee Earning activity under the Building Regulations	<i>As required under contract agreement. The data can also be used to forecast future workload and staffing requirements. The number of applications reflects fee income</i>	Data can be used to forecast future work trends, staffing requirements and to identify marketing potential.	Performance set against the contract and associated guidelines to achieve what the company sets out to achieve.

Service Level Indicator	2014 – 2015 Cheshire East achievements	Target set for 2015 – 2016	Target Set for 2016 - 2017	Schedule 1 KPI	Schedule 6 KPI	Possible Penalties	Target Achievement for the period
April - September 2015							
Number of Fee Earning Applications received	1962	2200	2200	Yes	Yes	No	937
Number of Initial Notices	1348	1400	1400	No	Yes	No	881
Number of all LA Apps as a % of all notices received	59%	70%	70%	No	Yes	No	51.5%
Percentage of Full Plans checked within 15 working days	84%	94%	94%	Yes	Yes	Yes	96%
Percentage of inspections carried out the same day where requested before 10.00am	100%	98%	98%	Yes	Yes	No	100%
Percentage of Decisions issued within 2 months		98%	98%	Yes	Yes	No	98%

Commentary: Performance associated with work received remains at a high standard. Significant marketing activity has been undertaken by employees who are predominantly frontline customer facing employees. Currently, market analysis has revealed the activity of **approximately 40 companies** that are now operating within the Cheshire East region competing for “fee earning building regulations element” business in this area. Feedback also reveals that fees and charges are lower compared with those set by Cheshire East which gives competitors a commercial advantage.

It should be noted that competitors do not undertake work relating to Building Regulations where no fee is applicable, such as works associated with disabled adaptations etc.

Action	Reason	Benefits to the Company	Benefits to the Customer
Monitor Performance of processing correspondence and PD enquiries	As required under contract agreement. Monitor Performance levels to clearly indicate areas for improvement.	Identify performance against others.	Performance set against the contract and associated guidelines to achieve what the company sets out to achieve. Improve customer service delivery of planning applications

Service Level Indicator	2014 – 2015 Cheshire East achievements	Target set for 2015 – 2016	Target Set for 2016 - 2017	Schedule 1 KPI	Schedule 6 KPI	Possible Penalties	Target Achievement for the period
April to September 2015							
Response to Permitted Development enquiries issued within 21 days		95%	95%	Yes	No	No	n/a
Acknowledgement of correspondence received sent out, scanned, indexed and filed in system within 2 working days		90%	90%	Yes	Yes	No	n/a

Commentary: Processes are not yet available to enable reporting of this target. This forms part of the processes review. Further discussion with the client will be necessary relating to the service level indicator for the acknowledgement, indexing of correspondence, as the whole function relies on the performance of the clients scanning bureau. Performance targets against permitted development enquiries should be available for the next quarterly report.

Action	Reason	Benefits to the Company	Benefits to the Customer
Monitor the turnaround of Local searches	As required under contract agreement. Monitor Performance levels to clearly indicate areas for improvement.	Identify performance against others.	Performance set against the contract and associated guidelines to achieve what the company sets out to achieve. Improve customer service delivery of planning applications

Service Level Indicator	2014 – 2015 Cheshire East achievements	Target set for 2015 – 2016	Target Set for 2016 - 2017	Schedule 1 KPI	Schedule 6 KPI	Possible Penalties	Target Achievement for the period
April to September 2015							
All Local searches turned around within 10 working days		100%	100%	Yes	Yes	No	100%
All Local searches turned around within 5 working days		95%	95%	Yes	Yes	Yes	78%
Expedited Searches turned around within 1 working day		100%	100%	Yes	Yes	Yes	100%
Standard Searches received (LLC1 and Con29)		5300	Tbc	Yes	No	No	3010
Non Standard Searches (LLC1, Con29R and Con29O)		1200	Tbc	Yes	No	No	701
LLC1 Only		2200	Tbc	Yes	No	No	1222
Supplementary Questions		50	Tbc	Yes	No	No	u/a

Commentary: One particular question responded to requires advice and support from another team. This, at present removes the ability for the Company to control the timelines for this type of enquiry. The level of searches has increased whilst the company has experienced a number of staffing issues due to the personal circumstances and maternity absences



Action	Reason	Benefits to the Company	Benefits to the Customer
Process requests for Street Names	Performance measures required under Agency agreement	Ensure satisfactory monitoring of performance.	Meet customer needs and expectations.

Service Level Indicator	2014 – 2015 Cheshire East achievements	Target set for 2015 – 2016	Target Set for 2016 - 2017	Schedule 1 KPI	Schedule 6 KPI	Possible Penalties	Target Achievement to end of month
Production of informal cabinet reports within 10 working days		100%	100%	Yes	No	No	100%

Commentary: None

4.0 Contractual Finance position

4.1 The table below demonstrates the financial position at the end of October 2015 and relates the performance of Civicance Ltd against the requirements of Schedule 6 (Payment and Performance Monitoring) of the Agency agreement.

Civicance & CEC contract position	Target £'000	Forecast £'000	Variance £'000
Mgmnt Fee for Civicance	1,764	1,764	0
Income on CEC	(1,756)	(1,608)	148
	8,000	156	148
Schedule 6 consideration	(494)	(401)	93
Expenditure for Civicance against contract	1,764	1,554	(210)
Net position			(62)

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