

**Report to Economy and Place Policy and
Scrutiny Committee**

14 November 2022

Report of the Director of Transport, Environment and Planning
(Portfolio of the Executive Member for Transport)

Digital Respark (resident parking zone permit management)

1. After a process of market engagement, procurement and implementation, the new Parking IT system, Taranto (by TSL systems), went live in September 2021.
2. The implementation of a new system was necessary as the old system was life expired and crucially did not meet PSN (IT security) compliance.
3. The new system also offered the opportunity to transition customers to an online platform in line with the Council's efficiency approach to customer contacts with channel shift away from inefficient face to face processes and improvements made to back office processes. The focus was very much on the customer.
4. It was always anticipated that some residents or customers (not all users are residents) would not be able to use an online process. An offline process was created for customers (referred to in this paper as "offline" customers, customers able to use the online system through the CYC website and the Taranto customer portal are referred to as "online" customers).
5. The system went live in two stages. The first stage was the back office functionality used by parking, customer services and the Civil Enforcement Officers. Once this was working the customer facing element went live.
6. After the customer facing element of system went live a number of issues have been identified in terms of customer experience,

customers' ability to create and manage permits in the system and customers' ability to complete transactions.

7. This report explores the background and the issues and presents some an update on the resolution of the issues.

Recommendations

8. It is recommended that the committee:
 - **Note the content of the report and positive progress and consider any recommendations**
 - ***Reason: to ensure lessons are learnt***

Background

9. Parking is universal and is a consideration for residents, businesses and visitors. Due to the historic make-up of parts of the City and the increased parking pressure in the City. In areas where pressures are high, resident parking zones are in operation and a large number of permits are in operation to seek to achieve the optimal approach to parking in that neighbourhood and the wider City in the context of the limitations to support daily life and business operation.
10. Pre-COVID analysis showed that 25% of footfall in the customer centre was parking related business. It was clear that allowing the customer to have access to their account online would seek to reduce face to face contact whilst also providing a better, more modern service to the customer. A number of Local Authorities evidenced the success of this approach and has been the experience in York with the channel shift of other transactional services online such as Revenues and Benefits. The contact centre had previously taken a saving in anticipation of the change.
11. As a backdrop to this it was part of corporate Digital Strategy to move customer transactions online. Agreed by Cabinet in 2014. Online Parking was a subject of Scrutiny in the last administration and the committee were content with the approach and the Council

- incorporated the project into the Digital Services Programme in order to support the move.
12. The legacy Parking back office system had been in place for over 10 years and although improvements has been made over that time, the previous parking system was life expired and needed replacing. The system also lacked adequate reporting tools and has limited functionality, which meant some processes were time consuming and resource intensive.
 13. A project to replace the parking back office system had been proposed since 2015 and assessments of the legacy system and the prospective market had been undertaken. It was clear that a system upgrade or replacement would be a significant undertaking and this presented a barrier as there would likely not be an ideal time to do the work, the total cost was uncertain and the impact of transitioning customers would be felt for 12 months as customers' permits expired through the year.
 14. As part of the budget process in 2018 a capital budget was assigned to support a Parking system replacement. ICT assigned a Project Manager to the work and the project was started. A parking services member of staff was transferred to ICT for the project and all services involved in the processes committed resource to the project and implementation.
 15. The project spans several services areas and all have been committed to project delivery and were represented on a project board. This has involved service staff being dedicated to the project for extended periods. The project team was made up of the operational areas that are responsible for the delivery of the processes. Customer services (including the web team), business support, parking services (back office and enforcement) and ICT. The Senior Responsible Officer (project board chair) is from the Parking Services management team in the Place Directorate and the project was managed by ICT.
 16. Priority was placed on the replacement of the parking system due to its PSN non-compliance from the perspective of IT security.

Procurement

17. After a period of market engagement and discussion with other Local Authorities the project team started to develop a detailed

specification in order to engage with the market. The scale of the task was recognised at this stage including the amount of configuration and the dependency on quality data.

18. The project team undertook a procurement process to purchase a new system. A framework designed to procure Civil enforcement systems was used. The contract was awarded to TSL for the Taranto system (used in many local authorities including Manchester and Sheffield and many London authorities and for the Congestion Zone in London).

Implementation

19. The project spanned a 2 year period including developing the specification, procurement, configuration (a very complex process with the numerous permits and permit conditions), testing (extensive testing has been undertaken on the iterations of the system as it's been configured), training and go live was in September 2021. This was moved back several times (originally December 2020) to take into account outside work demand on the service areas involved relating to the pandemic (including redeployment of staff to critical service areas and delays in suppliers responses to CYC's requirements as they also dealt with COVID impacts). Operating in the current financial environment, there was very little resilience in any of the service areas to pick up additional demand and all services have had to make compromises to deliver the system.
20. It is acknowledged that customer facing systems particularly those that affect residents' day to day lives and business could present challenges not always to do with the system itself but could also include access to digital facilities and skills. This is why digital inclusion activity across the city is important as we move more services online and it is important that we continue to provide telephone and face to face services for those that need them.
21. This was/is a complex IT implementation requiring systems interfaces with for example payment systems (Civica) and links to other systems for fast tracking eligibility checks. We have worked hard across all the teams involved to respond to customer feedback on the customer journey and made changes as quickly as possible to improve their experience. Whilst testing is a standard approach for us sometimes only after go-live do some

matters arise – this is the case for any system implementation for any organisation and the key is to respond quickly to feedback

22. Once the system was live it could not be rolled back in its entirety for IT security reasons and the old system not being compliant or in contract.

Customer Issues Raised after Go Live

23. Upon Go Live the number of issues caused serious challenges in terms of the operational teams (Customer services, Business support and Parking). There were already pressures on these services due to Covid and Covid redeployment activity, which was compounded by the increase in customer contact related to the parking system implementation,
24. In order to support offline customers and maintain Covid guidance in terms of protecting the workforce and customers, a call was followed up by an appointment in the customer centre (if required, the numbers of these were limited).
25. The increase in calls initially (4000 in September 2021 around 2500 above normal levels) led to delays in ability to respond, fast filled up all the available slots in the customer centre. There was a similar proportional shift in numbers of e-mails to the parking e-mail address. This further heightened customers' frustrations and this led to more interactions and complaints.
26. The pressure on customer services staff and also business support and parking back office staff has been enormous and the stress has affected staff morale and has had a knock on effect to retention of staff and recruitment. There is currently a significant issue supporting the current processes and may be issues implementing any options that include further reliance on staff and/or recruitment.
27. The issues experienced by customers have been summarised in the table below. Officers have put in place senior level meetings with TSL. Regular catch ups (every 2 weeks) are in place with the

Director of Operations at TSL and this has improved focus in terms of issue resolution.

Ref	Issue	Cause	Progress
A	<p>Customer usability of the system.</p>	<p>The council website was updated at go live about how to use the system and all residents written to. There were issues with duplicate letters, but this was an issue with the old system and how data was extracted.</p> <p>However, some customers jump straight to the parking system and don't read the guidance</p>	<p>Improved work ongoing</p> <p>This guidance has now been renewed and refreshed several times based upon the experience of customers. The Council are also exploring some videos to support customers. When the next version of the Taranto portal is released in Spring/Summer 2023, there will be more flexibility on what goes on a page and it will allow more guidance to be pushed to the Parking System rather than the CYC website and improve the customer experience.</p>
B	<p>Customer renewal letter</p> <p>The system produces a letter from a template for residents to remind them to renew their permits. There have been issues with the system</p>	<p>When new versions of the system are released or changes made it was overwriting the improvements already made.</p>	<p>Resolved</p> <p>This way updates are made has been changed and the issue is now resolved.</p> <p>Work is ongoing on ensuring the customer experience is improved with lessons learnt from customer experiences. Customers with multiple</p>

	reverting to old versions of the letter/permit.		permits will still receive multiple letters.
C	<p>Payment issues (affecting visitor vouchers)</p> <p>A customer attempting to purchase multiple visitor permits (more than 21) would not be able to complete the purchase.</p>	<p>This is down to the way the Council's Payment System and the Parking System talk to each other and it limits the number of batched transactions that can take place.</p>	<p>Resolved</p> <p>To avoid this the number of visitor permits purchased in one transaction has been limited to 20.</p> <p>Guidance has been updated to reflect this.</p> <p>A resident is entitled to 200 visitor permits in a year and both suppliers are working with the Council to work on a longer term solution to allow the 200 to be purchased in a single transaction.</p>
D	<p>Customer unable to register address</p> <p>Customer could not find their address on the system which is needed to order a permit.</p>	<p>This is down to an issue with the Local Land and Property Gazetteer file that contains all the address in the CYC boundary. It is continually updated, however some addresses were lost in the data transfer.</p>	<p>Resolved</p> <p>Clean address files are being sent by CYC remedy this issue and reduce the errors in the mapping exercise between the resident's address and the permit zones.</p> <p>As new customers come onto the system between now and the completion of the first year (September 2022) further quality assurance and checks will be made</p>

e	<p>Timing of Renewals</p> <p>A customer who is renewing a permit on the old system cannot renew on the new system until the permit has expired. They are then given 2 weeks to renew. Once the customer is in the system, for future renewals they will be able to renew up to 4 weeks in advance of the permit expiry.</p>		<p>Improved, time limited issue</p> <p>Additional guidance was on the website, but was not clear enough. Extra comms was communicated.</p> <p>However, there are now no permits in the old system so this is no longer an issue.</p>
f	<p>Customer not able to renew digital permit</p>	<p>There appears to be some configuration issues in the background which don't look to be updated as per our original specification</p>	<p>Resolved</p> <p>The supplier has found a solution, this is being monitored</p>
g	<p>Residents cannot check permits</p> <p>Residents have the ability to report vehicles that may be illegally parked through the parking hotline. Since the introduction of virtual permits, it has been more difficult for the public to identify if</p>	<p>This is a consequence of virtual permits and was anticipated. A solution was planned for a future phase</p>	<p>Not Resolved</p> <p>A resident permit checker will be released to the Council that will allow a resident to check through the system if a vehicle is permitted to park by entering the vehicle registration. It is anticipated that go live with the new version of</p>

	someone is illegally parked.		the system in Spring/Summer 2023.
H	<p>Customer password issues</p> <p>Some customers did not seem to be able to update their password correctly, they don't receive the automated e-mail to update their password.</p>	<p>This was a configuration issue in the system</p>	<p>Resolved</p> <p>This issue is resolved. A watching brief will be kept on the system to ensure users are not affected as they transition on through the course of the year</p>
i	<p>VRM details not correct</p> <p>There have been a small number of issues raised where a vehicle registration has been entered the information that is retrieved is incorrect.</p>	<p>As the vehicle information is provided by the DVLA this is not a system issue.</p>	<p>Resolved</p> <p>Customer support to improve the customer journey to support customers contacting DVLA to enact changes on the national database.</p>

28. Additional to the points above, more resource has been allocated by the ICT team to support ongoing issues.

Current position

29. A baseline of the take up of the system was taken in mid-March 2022, 6 months after implementation. It is difficult to determine how many customers have had issues with the system and which of the above issues each person had. However, by taking the user name of the person interacting with the system and cross checking whether the username is internal (a member of staff interacting with the system on the customer's behalf) and external (a customer completing an interaction themselves) it is possible to get a feel for

the number of customers who are using the system without assistance. Although this does not include any support that may have been provided in advance of the new permit process starting.

30. From mid-September to mid-March, the first 6 months of the system being live, 3,558 permits have had officer intervention and 13,602 permits have not had officer intervention.
31. This does not include customers who have been identified as offline. A process was already in place (including paper permits) for customers who would be unable to access the IT system. The view through the design, in order to drive channel shift (face to face and phone to the website), was to make sure this was reserved for customers who needed the assistance and not as an option for customers who were able to use the system through the website. The number of accounts created for offline customers was 422.
32. The reality of course is that the identification of IT skills is not binary and some online customers will need more support than others. The Contact Centre and Business Support will always need to continue to support some customers who are online.
33. The customer centre reported back that back to the same levels as pre the new system as have emails to business support at this checkpoint.

Council Plan

34. The proposals relate to the following Council's outcomes, as set out in the Council Plan 2019-2023 (Making History, Building Communities):
 - getting around sustainably;
 - a greener and cleaner city;

Risk Management

35. Risks are set out in the body of the report a move away from digital permits will potentially mean other groups come forward and want paper permits.

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**Report
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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

None

Wards Affected: All



**For further information please contact the author of
the report.**