

Decision session

21 March 2023

Executive Member for Transport

Report of the Director of Environment, Transport and Planning

Digital Respark (resident parking zone permit management)

Summary

1. The purpose of this paper is to present and allow the consideration of the recommendations on the Digital Parking system from the Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee in November 2022.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member is asked to consider the proposals in response to the recommendations from the Scrutiny meeting in November:
 - i. To note the response to the scrutiny recommendations detailed within paragraph 25 of this report.
 - ii. To note that the council's use of digital services is to ensure that the customer centre resources can be targeted at those customers who need the most support.
 - iii. To note that non digital customers can access paper visitor permits through the customer centre.
 - iv. To note a parking user group has been set up and the first meeting has occurred.
 - v. To note that a new version of the customer parking portal will go live in the summer.
 - vi. To request that the parking user group undertake some early testing of the customer portal of the new system before it goes live to the public.

- vii. To request that the parking user group reviews the customer journey for non digital customers of the new system particularly around visitor vouchers.
- viii. Recommendations from the user group will be reported to a future Executive Member Decision Session taking into account any budgetary implications of the recommendations.
- ix. To note the lesson learnt of the need for early engagement and lessons learnt.

Reason:

To respond to the recommendations of the Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee to ensure lessons are learned to improve the approach to parking for customers and residents.

Background

- 3. Parking is an important issue for many residents, businesses and visitors. Like many cities, York has areas where the demand for kerb side parking is high. One of the ways of managing parking pressure in residential areas, to limit commuter parking and encourage the use of sustainable transport modes such as park and ride is to limit the legal parking to those with a permit.
- 4. Residents Parking Zones (Respark) are a form of permit and are delivered through both formal and informal consultation with the residents and a decision made in public by the Executive Member.
- 5. There are a range of permits available to reflect the different needs to park in the Respark areas. So whilst residents may need a permit so will a carer who may need to visit regularly to care for a resident or traders to carry out work at a premises.
- 6. Pre-COVID analysis showed that 25% of footfall in the customer centre was parking related business. At this time there was no online self service approach, and it was clear that enabling the customer to have access to their account online would generally provide a better service for the majority of customers who are comfortable with online services and would also offer significant efficiencies for the council.
- 7. A number of Local Authorities evidenced the success of an online self service approach. This has also been the experience in York with the

channel shift of other transactional services online such as revenues and to some extent benefits.

8. The approach of a digital customer self serve approach is in accordance with the council's policy adopted in 2018 and part of corporate Digital Strategy to move customer transactions online. The customer centre remains as a point of contact and support for those customers who require additional assistance.

Replacement IT System

9. The previous Parking back office system had been in place for over 10 years and was no longer compliant with government requirements from the perspective of IT security. Importantly it had no front facing customer portal to deliver the council's approach of customer self serve through IT.
10. It was recognised that the impact of transitioning customers would be felt for 12 months as customers' resident parking permits expired throughout the year.
11. As part of the budget process in 2018 a capital budget was assigned to support a Parking system replacement. Officers were assigned to the project a Project Manager with ICT led the project supported by a board chaired by the Assistant Director. A parking services member of staff was transferred to ICT for key stages of the project and all services involved in the processes committed resource to the project and implementation.
12. 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.

Procurement

13. After a period of market engagement and discussion with other Local Authorities the project team developed 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.
14. 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

15. 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.
16. As with many other council systems where the customer is expected to interact with the digital system the customer journey must be at the heart of the design process. Whilst digital inclusion activity across the city is important to enable as many service users as possible to take advantage of the convenience of online it is also important that we continue to provide telephone and face to face services for those that need them, and also that we consider the most effective system delivery options in each case whether online, paper based, telephone or face to face.
17. The system was implemented in a phased way, being deployed to Civil Enforcement Officers first and resolving issues with them, before launching the customer portal.
18. This was and is a complex IT implementation requiring systems interfaces with for example payment systems and links to other systems for fast tracking eligibility checks and an integration with external systems of vehicle registration mark look up.

19. Upon Go Live of the customer element of the system a number of issues that had not been identified in testing meant customers could not obtain the permit they required.
20. Officers 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. For instance, the eligibility for paper permits for non digital customers was changed as a result of feedback.
21. A core principle behind the city's 100% digital inclusion partnership is to acknowledge that for some people digital will never be an option for them for a range of reasons, and that they will be supported through others to access the services they need. The approach in the council's customer centre is consistent for all non-digital customers for any of the council's systems they wish to access. The customer service representatives (CSRs) are trained to deal with each call and situation on its own merit. CSRs are trained to signpost the customer online (if a service is online) however if the customer informs the CSR they are unable to access services digitally then the CSR will offer the appropriate help and support without question irrespective of system and service. This has worked well for a number of years. For some systems or processes a further face to face appointment may be required in order to provide documentary evidence.
22. Customer Service support both offline customers and those with general enquiries over the phone and in-person (by appointment)
23. The issues experienced by customers have been summarised in the table below. Officers put in place senior level meetings with the provider and resolutions were found to the issues.

Ref	Issue	Cause	Progress
A	Customer usability of the system.	The council website was updated at go live about how to use the system and all residents written to. There were issues with	Improved work ongoing This guidance has now been renewed and refreshed several times based upon the experience of customers. The new

		<p>duplicate letters, but this was an issue with the old system and how data was extracted.</p> <p>Inevitably not everyone will read the guidance prior to attempting to complete the application, and this should be taken into account in the design of help screens linked to the online forms</p>	<p>portal is being designed using the Government Digital Standards which means it will comply with the 2018 UK Public Bodies Accessibility Regulations</p> <p>When the next version of the Taranto portal is released in Summer 2023, there will be more flexibility which will allow more customer guidance to be integrated in the step by step online process rather than that requiring the customer read it separately on the CYC website. on what goes on a page and it will allow more guidance to be pushed to the Parking System rather than the CYC website. As detailed elsewhere in the report it is proposed that the new user group test the new version of the customer portal.</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</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.</p>

	with the system reverting to old versions of the letter/permit.		Customers with multiple 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>Interim solution</p> <p>The number of visitor permits purchased in one transaction has been limited to 20 which is a temporary resolution. The new release should resolve this issue.</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>
E	<p>Timing of Renewals</p> <p>A customer who is renewing a permit</p>		<p>Improved, time limited issue</p> <p>Additional guidance was on the website, but</p>

	<p>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>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 someone is illegally parked.</p>	<p>This is a consequence of virtual permits and was anticipated. A solution has now been developed and will be part of the upgrade later this year</p>	<p>In Progress</p> <p>A resident permit checker has been completed by the supplier and will be released to the Council in March. After testing, it is anticipated that it will go live in Summer 2023.</p>
H	<p>Customer</p>	<p>This was a</p>	<p>Resolved</p>

	<p>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>configuration issue in the system</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>

2022 Scrutiny

24. A report was requested by the Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee on the Digital Respark (resident parking zone permit management), this was presented by officers in November 2022.
25. The Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee made the following recommendations at the meeting:
 - i. That the financial information on the full cost of the digital residents parking scheme be circulated to all Members

Response

The financial information on the full cost of the new parking system which covers all enforcement, residents permits, discounts for low emission vehicles and visitor vouchers has been circulated to members of the Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee. The cost of the parking system can be broken down as follows: the annual fee is £29,250 and the implementation and equipment costs were

£89,995 as a one off, this included the hand held devices and printers for the civil enforcement officers.

- ii. That it be recommended that a corporate apology be made via a press release for the problems with the digital residents parking scheme and information improvements being made, delegated to the Executive Member for Transport in conjunction with Communications Officers.

Response

The Executive Member attended scrutiny in November 2022 to address any concerns or questions the committee had. At the meeting the Executive Member made a public apology to people who had been adversely affected by the new system. As detailed in this paper and as with all IT system implementation projects there are lessons learned for the council which will inform future projects.

- iii. That it be recommended that that a User Forum of different groups (groups representing elderly, disabled and non-digital residents) be set up, delegated to the Executive Member for Transport in conjunction with Officers.

Response

A user group has been established and has had its first meeting. As outlined in the paper the proposal is that this group will support the roll out of a new version of the customer portal and review the customer journey – especially for non digital customers.

- iv. That it be recommended that savings on support staff not be made until the digital residents parking scheme was up and running.

Response

This needs to be considered as part of the budget setting exercise recognising that officers are required to deliver the savings as set out in the budget approved at Full Council.

- v. That it be recommended that the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee examine digital inclusion and how support can be given to non-digital residents on the implementation of new systems.

Response

This needs to be considered by the chair of Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee as part of the next administration who already have a digital and customer service updates..

- vi. That it be recommended that the Executive Member for Transport promote the use of paper permits (for which it was known that paper permits were still being given out to a small number of people).

Response

Support is available for non digital customers as described in this report and that includes paper visitor vouchers if necessary. As detailed earlier in the report the customer journey will be reviewed for non digital customers in partnership with the user forum and a further report brought to the Executive Member.

Consultation

The formulation of the user group is how consultation on key changes in the customer journey will be consulted upon.

Council Plan

26. This report is supportive of the following priorities in the Council Plan which focuses on key outcomes that include:

- Getting around sustainably and
- An open and effective council.

Implications

Financial

27. There are no direct financial implications resulting from the report recommendations. Any financial impact of changes to the way the system operates will need to be considered in the decision making to make a change .

Human Resources (HR)

28. There are no implications around the decisions in this report.

Legal

29. There are no direct legal implications resulting from the report recommendations. Any legal impact of changes will need to be considered.

Equalities

30. The Council recognises its Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it in the exercise of a public authority's functions).

31. The approach to non digital customers is designed to specifically provide additional support to those with protected characteristics. Given the feedback it is important to understand if these issues remain or if the improvements have resolved those issues.

32. Equalities Impact assessments will be carried out where work is taken forward on schemes as a result of this paper.

Risk Management

33. Ensuring that the system works for all residents is part of the risk management.

Contact Details

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report:**

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**Report
Approved**



Date 06/01/2023

Specialist Implications Officer(s) List information for all

Financial Implications
Jayne Close
Principal Accountant

Legal Implications
Cathryn Moore
Corporate Business Partner (Legal)

Wards Affected: All wards

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: N/A

Abbreviations:

DfT – Department for Transport
LTN – Low Traffic Neighbourhood