

North Yorkshire County Council

Corporate & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee

24 October 2022

Update on the Operation of the Parish Portal / Members' Dashboard and Parish Council Engagement

Report of the Assistant Director – Highways and Transportation

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To update the Committee on the Parish Portal and Members' Dashboard.
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2.0 Background – Parish Portal

2.1 Members will recall the briefing note submitted to your meeting of 13th September 2021. By way of update/recap, there are some 731 Parish councils/meetings in North Yorkshire. Of this number, around 570 are currently active. When we first reported in December 2018, some 382 parish portal accounts existed - this figure increased to 397 last July and has increased further since to 430. This means that three out of every four active parish councils/meetings now has a parish portal account.

2.2 Approximately 26,000 service requests have been made via the portal since the launch. The target set for activity is 11,000 service requests annually on an on-going basis and in the last 12 months to end of March 2022 that target has been reached. More encouraging is that volumes continue to increase steadily, which demonstrates the long-term value of the portal and the increasing use / buy-in continues to be reinforced by those parishes using the facility who see it as being of benefit.

3.0 Ongoing / Continual Improvements – Parish Portal

3.1 As per the last update, work has been ongoing to increase the list of services that can be requested via the Portal to make the portal more attractive to Parishes. Those currently 'integrated' into our asset management system (Symology) are Roads, Pavements, Drainage, Vegetation and Street Lighting. This means that we have the mechanism to provide direct feedback to the Parish on any cases they may raise in these specific categories. Work continues to improve this amenity and the following elements have been reviewed and integrated to simplify and improve user experience:

- Boundary fences and walls
- Road markings
- Obstructions/deposits on the highway
- Winter maintenance – request for grit bin/heap refill

3.2 Therefore, the next priorities for overall improvement of the parish portal are:

- Continue to extend the number of services available through the portal – including yet to be determined services currently delivered by District/Borough Councils
- Continue to reduce the number of non-integrated services.

- Review parish feedback and continually refine the product
- Work with Members to understand how they can benefit from the information in the parish portal (and the customer portal) to understand reported and resolved issues in their divisions
- Working with Executive Member for Highways and Transport and in turn Local Members to further-increase the number of parishes registered and the number of service requests received through the portal.

4.0 Members' Dashboard

- 4.1 Using existing Business Intelligence data, we have developed a system that allows Members to have an overview of what Parishes and the Public are reporting in their Division. This provides a more streamlined means of Members being able to access data in their ward in sufficient detail that allows vision of what Parish/Town Councils are reporting in their Division without the need for Members to register for every individual parish portal account. The Members Dashboard also includes reports made via the customer portal thereby giving Members an encompassing perspective of demand for service in their Divisions.
- 4.2 This system is now live and we have delivered a presentation to new Executive Member for Highways & Transport who is happy to advocate use of this system to all Members. It is an easy to use but effective tool to access real-time information regarding activity and service demand in their Divisions. This allows Members to keep a true 'finger on the pulse' of local issues on a local level and will benefit the Members as well as the parish councils/meetings they support, especially as Members can access data immediately in advance of any formal parish council meetings.

5.0 Equalities Implications

- 5.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for any adverse equality impacts arising from the recommendation. It is the view of officers that the recommendation does not have an adverse impact on any of the protected characteristics identified in the Equalities Act 2010 and a copy of the completed decision that "Equalities Impact Assessment is included with this report

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 Now the system is set up and continues to use Business Intelligence data, any ongoing maintenance of the system is negligible. Whilst some officer time will be required to induct/upskill new Members and refresh re-elected Members in how to access and navigate the system. This is being undertaken as BAU (as part of the HCCO role) Any training can be facilitated via the local weekly Member Highways surgeries that now exist, so Members could have area-based or one-to-one training depending on their preference. The fact that Members can also 'self-serve' using the dashboard if they wish means that HCCOs will have more time to support Members with more-complex queries. Ultimately, this 'quid-pro-quo' time swap means there are no financial implications.

7.0 Legal Implications

7.1 There are no legal implications with these proposals.

8.0 Climate Change Impact Assessment

8.1 Since the Members' Dashboard was rolled out there has been no environmental / climate change impact. Access to data would be online using existing IT equipment issued to Members. The Climate Change Impact Assessment form is attached to this report

9.0 Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Members of this Committee:

- i. Note the content of this report
- ii. Endorse the continued roll out of the Members Dashboard.

BARRIE MASON
Assistant Director – Highways & Transportation

Authors of Report:

Nigel Smith, Head of Highway Operations
Deborah Flowers – highways Customer Communications Officer

Background Documents:

- Briefing Note dated 13th September 2021 to informal Skype Meeting of O&S Committee
- Report to O&S Committee December 2018

Initial equality impact assessment screening form (As of October 2015 this form replaces 'Record of decision not to carry out an EIA') This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.	
Directorate	Business and Environmental Services
Service area	Highways & Transportation
Proposal being screened	Update on the Operation of the Parish Portal / Members' Dashboard and Parish Council Engagement
Officer(s) carrying out screening	Nigel Smith
What are you proposing to do?	Provide Update on Parish Portal use & continued Roll-out of Members' Dashboard
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	<p>O&S Committee are keen to keep pace with take-up / use of the portal and the rollout of the Members' dashboard to provide County Councillors with a simple means of accessing service request data salient to their Division will improve Members' ability to keep track of those service requests and support the local community as strongly as possible</p> <p>A number of mechanisms exist for online reporting of highway issues; 'do it online' and self-service makes the process efficient, but to ensure its effectiveness parish and town council meetings/ forums are supported by local highways teams. The desired outcome is an effective and efficient fault reporting system</p>
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.	No. The portal is already up and running and the Dashboard uses existing business intelligence data. Upskilling Members can be incorporated into regular liaison meetings between local highways contacts and Members
Is there likely to be an adverse impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYCC's additional agreed characteristics?	
<p>As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics? • Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important? • Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to? 	
No / Not applicable	

If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be a significant adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your [Equality rep](#) for advice if you are in any doubt.

Protected characteristic	Yes	No	Don't know/No info available
Age		√	
Disability		√	
Sex (Gender)		√	
Race		√	
Sexual orientation		√	
Gender reassignment		√	
Religion or belief		√	
Pregnancy or maternity		√	
Marriage or civil partnership		√	
NYCC additional characteristic			
People in rural areas		√	
People on a low income		√	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		√	
Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.	No		
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.	No		
Decision (Please tick one option)	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	√	Continue to full EIA:
Reason for decision	<p>This a report that updates members on the use of the Parish Portal and also seeks endorsement to continue the roll out of the Members Dashboard. It has no negative impact on the operation of the highway from the current position.</p> <p>Both the Parish Portal and the Members Dashboard meet the accessibility regulations and guidance for public sector bodies.</p> <p>For these reasons, it has no negative impact on people with protected characteristics.</p>		
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	<i>Barrie Mason</i>		
Date	30/08/2022		

Climate change impact assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to help us understand the likely impacts of our decisions on the environment of North Yorkshire and on our aspiration to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030, or as close to that date as possible. The intention is to mitigate negative effects and identify projects which will have positive effects.

This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. The final document will be published as part of the decision making process and should be written in Plain English.

If you have any additional queries which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Please note: You may not need to undertake this assessment if your proposal will be subject to any of the following:

Planning Permission
 Environmental Impact Assessment
 Strategic Environmental Assessment

However, you will still need to summarise your findings in in the summary section of the form below.

Please contact climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk for advice.

Title of proposal	Update on Parish Portal & ongoing Roll-out of Members' Dashboard
Brief description of proposal	Provide Update on Parish Portal use & ongoing Roll-out of Members' Dashboard
Directorate	BES
Service area	H&T / Highway Ops
Lead officer	Nigel Smith
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	Nigel Smith – Head of Highway Operations
Date impact assessment started	30 August 2022

Options appraisal

Were any other options considered in trying to achieve the aim of this project? If so, please give brief details and explain why alternative options were not progressed.

No – Following discussion at previous O&S Committees, this is an evolution of the Parish Portal Concept by allowing Members a means of accessing Business intelligence Data through a dashboard.

This is a regular report based on the ongoing roll out of the parish portal (and Members' dashboard).

What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

Please explain briefly why this will be the result, detailing estimated savings or costs where this is possible.

Given the system uses existing Business Intelligence data, any maintenance of the system will be negligible, if any. Some officer time will be required to brief / upskill new and re-elected Members in how to access and navigate the system.

This can be rolled out as part of the Highway Customer Communication Officer (HCCO) role.

Any training can be facilitated via the local weekly Member Highways surgeries that now exist so Members could have area-based or one to one training depending on their preference. The fact that Members can also 'self-serve' using the dashboard if they wish means that HCCOs will have more time to support Members with more-complex queries.

Ongoing promotion of effective self-service through our online reporting mechanisms ensures costs of dealing with service requests are kept to a minimum as opposed to, for example, parish and town councils calling NYCCs customer service centre. Ultimately, this is a cost-neutral exercise.

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>	
<p>Minimise greenhouse gas emissions e.g. reducing emissions from travel, increasing energy efficiencies etc.</p>	Emissions from travel		X		<p>There might be a small reduction in travel if Members do not travel to Highways Offices to seek information about service requests in their Divisions once this can be accessed online</p>		
	Emissions from construction		X				
	Emissions from running of buildings		X				
	Other		X				
<p>Minimise waste: Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost e.g. reducing use of single use plastic</p>			X				
<p>Reduce water consumption</p>			X				

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>
<p>Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)</p>		X		<p>Potential for reduced CO2 emissions if travel to meet officers reduced</p>		
<p>Ensure resilience to the effects of climate change e.g. reducing flood risk, mitigating effects of drier, hotter summers</p>		X				
<p>Enhance conservation and wildlife</p>		X				
<p>Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of North Yorkshire's landscape</p>		X				
<p>Other (please state below)</p>		n/a				

Are there any recognised good practice environmental standards in relation to this proposal? If so, please detail how this proposal meets those standards.

Not directly, however the ability to access this information online and remotely will be of benefit to users (Members)

Summary Summarise the findings of your impact assessment, including impacts, the recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

If officer recommendations are taken then the proposal is to seek permission from the Corporate Director and Executive Member for access & Leader to roll this facility out to all County Councillors, however there is no environmental / climate change impact.

Sign off section

This climate change impact assessment was completed by:

Name	Nigel Smith
Job title	Head of Highway Operations
Service area	Highway Operations / H&T
Directorate	BES
Signature	N Smith
Completion date	30 August 2022

Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature): *B Mason*

Date: 30 August 2022