

# North Yorkshire Council

## Corporate & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee

11 September 2023

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

#### Report of the Assistant Director – Highways and Transportation, Parking Services, Street Scene, Parks and Grounds

#### 1.0 Purpose of Report

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

#### 2.0 Background – Parish Portal

2.1 Members will recall the briefing note submitted to your meeting of 24 October 2022. 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 has now increased to 457. This means that 80% of all active parish councils/meetings now has a parish portal account.

2.2 Approximately 38,000 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 2023 that target has been exceeded. 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 Improvements to date – 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. 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

#### 4.0 Future of the Parish Portal

4.1 There will be a project set up later this year to look at the future of the portal. This project will look at what is the best solution now that we are a single tier authority:

- The project will look at the scope of the current portal with a view to finding a solution that can deliver more integrated highway service options as well as additional services more representative of the Environment Directorate. The ambition is to include a wider range of Street Scene services at a minimum.
- We are very grateful for the feedback Parishes and Members have provided to date on the portal and this and any future feedback will be considered for any upcoming project to ensure what we deliver meets their needs.
- The message to Parish Councils is that we are considering how the new council will engage with them in the future and what tools we need to do this. We will work with them to understand their requirements and ensure that they are fully engaged in any changes.
- We will engage with Members as part of any change project.

#### **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 Division.
- 4.2 This system has been live for some time. It is an easy to use but effective tool to access real-time information regarding activity and service demand in their Division. 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.
- 4.4 Members can request refresher training or introduction sessions at any time via the HCCO.
- 4.5 The Members Dashboard will be considered during the project to review the Parish Portal so Members can still access information in their divisions.

#### **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 – Appendix A

#### **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 – Appendix B

## **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.

### APPENDICES:

Appendix A	Equalities Impact Assessment
Appendix B	Climate Change Impact Assessment

BARRIE MASON

Assistant Director – Highways & Transportation, Parking Services, Street Scene, Parks and Grounds

### Authors of Report:

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

### Background Documents:

- Briefing Note dated 24 October 2022
- Briefing Note dated 13 September 2021 to informal Skype Meeting of O&S Committee
- Report to O&S Committee December 2018

<b>Initial equality impact assessment screening form</b> (As of October 2015 this form replaces 'Record of decision not to carry out an EIA') <b>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.</b>	
<b>Directorate</b>	Environment
<b>Service area</b>	Highways & Transportation
<b>Proposal being screened</b>	<b>Update on the Operation of the Parish Portal / Members' Dashboard and Parish Council Engagement</b>
<b>Officer(s) carrying out screening</b>	Nigel Smith
<b>What are you proposing to do?</b>	Provide Update on Parish Portal use & continued Roll-out of Members' Dashboard
<b>Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?</b>	<p>O&amp;S Committee are keen to keep pace with take-up / use of the portal and the rollout of the Members' dashboard to provide 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>
<b>Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources?</b> 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
<b>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 NYC's additional agreed characteristics?</b>	
<p>As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics?</li> <li>• Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important?</li> <li>• Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to?</li> </ul> <p>No / Not applicable</p>	
<b>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 <a href="#">Equality rep</a> for advice if you are in any doubt.</b>	

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		√	
<b>NYC additional characteristic</b>			
People in rural areas		√	
People on a low income		√	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		√	
<b>Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts</b> (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.	No		
<b>Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate?</b> (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		
<b>Decision (Please tick one option)</b>	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	√	Continue to full EIA:
<b>Reason for decision</b>	<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>		
<b>Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)</b>	<i>Karl Battersby</i>		
<b>Date</b>	31.08.2023		

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk) for advice.

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

**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 NYCs customer service centre. Ultimately, this is a cost-neutral exercise.

APPENDIX B

<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><b>Positive impact</b> (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p><b>No impact</b> (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p><b>Negative impact</b> (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"> <li>• Changes over and above business as usual</li> <li>• Evidence or measurement of effect</li> <li>• Figures for CO<sub>2</sub>e</li> <li>• Links to relevant documents</li> </ul>	<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 <b>greenhouse gas emissions</b> 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 <b>Members do not travel to Highways Offices to seek information about service requests in their Divisions once this can be accessed online</b></p>		
	Emissions from construction		X				
	Emissions from running of buildings		X				
	Other		X				
<p>Minimise <b>waste</b>: Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost e.g. reducing use of single use plastic</p>			X				
<p>Reduce <b>water</b> consumption</p>			X				



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<p>Minimise <b>pollution</b> (including air, land, water, light and noise)</p>		<p>X</p>		<p>Potential for reduced CO2 emissions if travel to meet officers reduced</p>		
<p>Ensure <b>resilience</b> to the effects of climate change e.g. reducing flood risk, mitigating effects of drier, hotter summers</p>		<p>X</p>				
<p>Enhance <b>conservation</b> and wildlife</p>		<p>X</p>				
<p>Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of <b>North Yorkshire's landscape</b></p>		<p>X</p>				
<p>Other (please state below)</p>		<p>n/a</p>				

**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 Councillors, however there is no environmental / climate change impact.

**Sign off section**

This climate change impact assessment was completed by:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Nigel Smith</b>
<b>Job title</b>	<b>Head of Highway Operations</b>
<b>Service area</b>	<b>Highway Operations / H&amp;T</b>
<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Environment</b>
<b>Signature</b>	<b>N Smith</b>
<b>Completion date</b>	<b>30 August 2023</b>

**Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature): Karl Battersby**

**Date: 31 August 2023**