

Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

21 June 2023

Update on Virtual Residents Parking Permit System

Overview

The existing Residents Parking Permit system requires replacing and the move from a paper system to a virtual option. This was approved by Cabinet on 8th October 2020.

There have been delays in migrating from the existing system over to a new virtual permit system. This briefing note provides an explanation for those delays and sets out our plans and timelines for the delivery of a new virtual system.

1.0 Key Issues

- 1.1 In November 2021 NSL (Marstons) successfully maintained the Civil Parking Enforcement contract. Within that contract, the supplier is required to provide a functional permit system, this has been provided by a 3rd party provider called Imperial since 2014. This existing paper permit system is no longer supported by Imperial and needs replacing.
- 1.2 In December 2021, Imperial provided a new virtual permit system for the Authority as part of this new contract. Further to significant configuration and testing, unfortunately the new system was not compatible with the Authorities requirements. The new system could not accurately deliver an address database to differentiate eligible and non-eligible properties. It is imperative for the system to accurately issue permits for eligible properties and restrict non eligible properties from obtaining a permit. Failure to provide an accurate secure system risks financial and reputational damage for the Authority and would cause our customers unnecessary distress and confusion.
- 1.3 In December 2022 NSL provided an inhouse working alternative virtual permit system, this was not previously available. This new system is compatible with the Authority and will provide the secure virtual permit service required.
- 1.4 Testing is underway on the new system with a new project team and new delivery timelines.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The existing secure system - Permit Gateway, is provided by Imperial who also provide the secure back office Penalty Charge Notice processing software for NSL and Warwickshire.
- 2.2 With the successful retender of the Civil Parking Enforcement contract (which was retained by NSL) in November 2021, NSL and the Authority set up a project team to manage the transfer from existing permit system to a new virtual system.

- 2.3 From November 2021 the Authority started the system configuration and testing. This configuration included ensuring all eligible properties were migrated accurately from the existing system.
- 2.4 The Authority and NSL on-street and back-office staff started the required testing on all elements of the permit scheme including the residents permit application process (including documentation upload), cancellation, refunds and all correspondence.
- 2.5 The original go live date of June 2022 was delayed due to testing failures. In testing for eligible addresses, the new system was not enabling eligible properties to obtain a permit while enabling non eligible properties to obtain one.
- 2.6 The WCC/NSL project team met every two weeks with senior representatives from Imperial to seek solutions following investigations and system reconfigurations. At each stage further testing was completed by the Authority, with further errors detected.
- 2.7 In November 2022, Imperial had reprogrammed the address data and reconfigured the new system but were not successful in fixing the eligibility issue.
- 2.8 With a mutual agreement of all parties, it was decided that the Imperial Permit Virtual system was not fit for use by the Authority.
- 2.9 From the Authorities perspective, the system must be accurate and enable eligible properties to manage their permit applications, renewals, amendments and cancellations with ease and trust in the system.
- 2.10 In December 2022, an alternative system, Permit Apply was identified by NSL as being suitable for the Authority. This system was not previously available but has now been successfully implemented in three further Local Authorities.
- 2.11 In January 2023, following detailed discussions with NSL and their programming team the Authority agreed to implement Permit Apply since NSL confirmed it is able to provide all elements required.

2.12 Benefits of Permit Apply

- Streamlined and intuitive customer journey
- Tested and approved address database
- Fully auditable refund process
- NSL back-office staff are familiar with the application
- In house application enabling quick fixes to issues
- No 3rd party permit supplier

- 2.13 Since January, the Authority have been configuring and testing the permit system and can confirm that the eligible/non eligible address testing has been completed and approved. All system generated emails have been drafted, tested and approved. Regular meetings are held between NSL and the Authority to progress with testing and configuration.

2.14 Next steps

- The continuation of testing and final system sign off
- Permit renewal letters for all existing permit holders
- Communication of updated system via multiple media outlets.
- Monthly roll out from existing system to new virtual system

3.0 Financial Implications

3.1 None

4.0 Environmental Implications

4.1 None

5.0 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

5.1 Final test system sign off 16th June 2023
System implementation date 24th July 2023

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